Already The Hour

History and Analysis of the Guerrilla Movements in Mexico: 1965 – 1978

Cover: Genaro Vasquez (center) and guerrillas of the National Civic Revolutionary Association

"The struggle will be terribly protracted. It will not be counted in years but in decades; therefore it is already the hour to begin. It is necessary to start young if we want to have the qualities that only the years of action can give . . ."

Arturo Gamiz

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- 3543 18th St. #17, San Francisco, CA 94110, (415) 561-9055
- P.O. Box 60925, Los Angeles, CA 90060, (213) 392-8733
- P.O. Box 2512, Cadman Plaza, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11202
- Box 295, 2520 N. Lincoln Ave., Chicago, IL 60614 (312) 278-6706
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*The New Movement has translated and published this excerpt from Jaime Lopez' book because it is an important historical record of the Mexican guerrilla movements of the 1960's and 1970's. However, we do not necessarily agree with all the analysis presented by Jaime Lopez in this work.

This book is dedicated to the memory of Adelaido Villapando Contreras and Judith Vidrio Auguiano, Mexicano revolutionaries who heroically gave their lives in attempting to prevent the capture of Puerto Rican patriot William Morales in Puebla, Mexico. We also dedicate this book to Antonio Pedro Ruiz, 16, an indigenous Mexicano who was wounded and captured defending comrade Morales, and who has now been "disappeared" by the PRI government.

Acknowledgement: To the Movimiento de Liberacion Nacional Mexicano for their contribution to the preparation of this book.

INTRODUCTION

In the past years, the world has seen the rising up of the masses of people in Central America against centuries of oppression and domination. Numerous government ideologues -- from Brzezinski to Secretary of State Schultz -- have been warning that Mexico will be the next to fall. Contrary to what many government policy makers believe, Mexico is not just another domino. Mexico is a nation like Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, that for too long has been under the suffocating grip of imperialism, with the same extremes of poverty and wealth, corruption and repression that has set Latin America ablaze. The U.S. government does understand the implications of this, because not only will social upheaval in Mexico mean a revolution at our doorstep, but the border that the U.S. guards with such military ferocity, will not be able to protect this country from the wrath and anger of the Mexican masses.

In solidarity with the developing struggle in Mexico, the New Movement in Solidarity with the Puerto Rican and Mexican Revolutions is proud to bring these translations of documents from the Mexican movement to English-speaking readers. This record of the continuing struggle of the peasants and urban poor of Mexico rips away the facade of progress and stability, which the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (P.R.I.) has fought to maintain, to reveal a repressive state, propped up by military rule, with the full support and backing of the United States.

We hope these translations will be a first step toward a better understanding of the nature of Mexican society. For North Americans, particularly those concerned with the possibility of U.S. intervention in Latin America, we hope these documents will further an understanding of the need to support the revolutionary struggle in Mexico.

The revolutionaries whose activities and words are described in this book represent a continuity of political and military struggle in Mexico. The first part of the book consists of three chapters excerpted from the book, **10 YEARS OF GUERRILLA STRUGGLE IN MEXICO,** by Jaime Lopez. In this popular work, the author details the rise and development of guerrilla organizations led by Genaro Vasquez, Lucio Cabañas and Arturo Gamiz.

The second work, **NOTHING IS FREE IN HISTORY**, is written by a collective of political activists in the state of Chihuahua, Mexico. In this they analyze and critique the guerrilla movement led by Arturo Gamiz in the mid 1960's. This analysis is followed by excerpts from the writings and speeches of Arturo Gamiz. All the translations we have included clearly illustrate that the guerrilla struggle of the 1960's and 1970's grew out of mass response to the social inequities of Mexican society and in opposition to the repressive state apparatus.

Although both reprints discuss leaders and a movement that took place over 10 years ago, a look at present day Mexico discloses that the conditions that gave rise to these movements, have not changed. If anything, with the Mexican economy in ruins, conditions are worsening for more people. Looking at Mexico we see a mass of 70 million poor, working as near slaves on gigantic haciendas, agricultural factories growing corn, fruit or cash crops; or marginally employed as workers in U.S. companies. Over 50% of Mexico's present population is unemployed because of austerity measures imposed by the International Monetary Fund (which Mexico accepted in order to secure a $4 billion loan needed to stave off default on its $80 billion debt to foreign banks). 1000 children die each day from malnutrition. The ending of government subsidies and the 80% devaluation has put tortillas, milk and eggs out of reach for most people. Because of the inhuman conditions of life, it is estimated that hundreds of people cross the border every day.

Despite 80 years of struggle by poor peasants for land they could farm, 14 million peasants are landless while 10,000 large landowners own most of the land. Clearly, the P.R.I. government has never fulfilled the promises it made in the Mexican revolution of 1910 to distribute the land more equally. In the revolution, the Mexican peasantry rose up with the cry of TIERRA Y LIBERTAD (Land and Freedom). Peasants were the backbone of revolutionary armies from Oaxaca in the south to Chihuahua in the north, and in the territories north of the border. The armies of Emiliano Zapata and Pancho Villa swept victoriously into Mexico City but the power of the state was seized by the party of the national bourgeoisie, the Partido Revolucionario Mexicano (P.R.M.). Villa and Zapata were assassinated. The P.R.M. became the P.R.I. and the goals of the revolution -- the promise of land and freedom --were betrayed. The P.R.I. left the peasants and urban poor to fend for themselves as they built power for the new rulers.

Since then, the P.R.I. has controlled Mexico. Far from being the independent and progressive force in the region that it likes to project, the P.R.I. has ensured its own power by building a nation that is dependent on the U.S. for its growth and survival. The North American left, in particular, has ignored this reality and has congratulated the P.R.I. as "anti-imperialists" who fight to protect Mexican oil and support liberation movements. The actual fact is the P.R.I. is as repressive a regime as any in Latin America: there are known to be at least 1000 persons who have been 'disappeared' by the Mexican government. These 'disappeared' opponents of the P.R.I. regime are the subject of a growing campaign to investigate the murder and repression by the government and its hired band of thugs. One such group, the White Brigades, a hired right-wing group of enforcers, are estimated to have killed more than 200 people in the past two years. By official count, shoot-outs between the private armies of landowners and rural police with landless peasants leave 300 peasants dead every year.

Mexican industry is tied almost exclusively to the U.S. Mexico owes $80 billion to U.S. banks. Mexico has the world's largest oil reserve, but the oil flows in a

Demonstrators demand that the PRI government account for the whereabouts of hundreds of "disappeared" political prisoners. Pictures of some of the missing activists appear on the banner.

pipeline directly into Texas and other U.S. distribution centers. In exchange, the P.R.I. plays a critical role for the U.S. in Latin America. Under the guise of supporting liberation struggles, they actually offer and foster social democratic alternatives which only serve to isolate and contain those fighting for revolutionary change in Latin America. The true intent of the P.R.I.'s maneuverings can be seen when the threat of revolution comes too close to its own borders. The fact that the P.R.I. has moved thousands of troops to the Guatemalan border and sends back Guatemalan revolutionaries where they face certain death at the hands of the regime, most reveals the role it must, and will play, in relationship to national liberation in Central America.

In the state of Guerrero, where Mexican revolutionaries have built close ties with the revolutionaries of Guatemala , the P.R.I. has instituted a virtual state of

siege, in a desperate attempt to destroy the development of a guerrilla movement.

The guerrilla struggles of the 1970's far from ending with the period described in the book, will again become a reality in the 1980's. Today, Mexican revolutionaries are attempting to apply the lessons learned from that period to the conditions they, and the masses of people, face.

One such organiztion is the Comite de Defensa Popular (C.D.P.), located in the northern state of Chihuahua. The C.D.P. has organized over 300,000 workers and peasants to seize land and set up autonomous comunities called *colonias.* The C.D.P. is part of the independent left in Mexico that has rejected the reformist path of struggle, and are exposing the true nature of the P.R.I., of U.S. penetration of Mexico, and is organizing the discontent and anger of the masses into a militant, revolutionary struggle for socialism.

It is no wonder that Senator Henry Jackson, among others, has been warning of the possibility of moving more U.S. troops to the U.S.-Mexico border. Revolutionary activity in Mexico not only threatens U.S. hegemony in Latin America, but the stability of U.S. imperialism within its own borders. In the past years, the C.D.P., and other organizations, have taken up the demand of Mexican revolutionaries in the U.S. 'southwest' to destroy the border that has divided their nation for over 100 years. Mexico is one nation – from the Yucatan in the south to the occupied territories of California, Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada, Texas and Colorado in the north. This territory, known as the southwest of the U.S., is land that was torn away from Mexico by U.S. invasion and military conquest in the 19th century. Since this time, the U.S. has occupied and colonized the Mexican people living on this land. The Mexican revolution is a battle for national liberation that will destroy the border imposed by imperialist aggression and will challenge the very foundation of U.S. wealth and power. The strategy to reunify Mexico under one socialist nation is a strategy that will win liberation for the masses of Mexican people.

It is in the context of intensified repression and growing popular resistance in Mexico that the New Movement developed this book. The documents challenge us, as North Americans, to understand the terms on which we must support revolution in Mexico and the whole of Latin America. They point to the necessity of armed struggle -- in fact, the victories and defeats of the guerrilla movement point to the need for a strategy of protracted people's war to achieve full victory. The New Movement publishes this book as an act of solidarity with the Mexican revolution and all peoples in struggle throughout Latin America.

Eight thousand members of the Comite de Defensa Popular (CDP) demonstrate against the PRI government in Juarez on International Workers Day, 1981.

Excerpts from

10 YEARS OF GUERRILLA STRUGGLE IN MEXICO

by Jaime Lopez; Editorial Posada, Mexico, 1974

CHAPTER I
ACTIONS OF THE MEXICAN GUERRILLAS
(Ciudad Madera)

The History of the Ibarra Family

The Ibarras were (and are indeed today) a powerful cattle-ranching family in the mountainous part of Chihuahua. Arnaldo Gutierrez, a PRI politician, accused José Ibarra (one of the most noted members of the Ibarra dynasty) in the newspaper *Norte de Chihuahua* (July 22, 1964) of having taken over land that should have been sold to landless peasants:

> During the regime of President Ruiz Cortines, said Arnaldo Gutierrez, the Secretary of Agriculture authorized Bosques de Chihuahua (Chihuahua Forests), which had acquired 615,000 acres of land in the mountain region for 15 million pesos, to parcel out this land and sell 400,000 acres to the campesinos, who had always lived in that district and had secured their land rights. Instead of being sold to the residents, these cleared surplus lands (it was verified that only 245,000 acres were suitable for forestry) were sold to big and small ranchers. A partnership or business association was formed named "Four Friends," composed of Alejandro Prieto, Tomás Vega Portillo, Roberto Schneider and José Ibarra Bojórquez. The partnership later dissolved and José Ibarra remained the sole owner of the land.

Arnaldo Gutierrez added that, as a result of this scheme, "discontent arose among the true campesinos . . ."

José Ibarra and his brother Florentino owned several thousand acres. José declared on one occasion that he owned 9,000 acres of grazing land in the Municipality of Madera; his son Hector owned 5,000 and his daughter Yolanda 4,000. "I have," he added, "10 more children to whom I have been unable to give land, because if I gave out all of mine to them, there would not be enough to go around." (*Norte de Chihuahua* July 21, 1964)

On July 20, 1964, General Antonio Gómez Velasco, Commander of the Fifth Military Zone headquartered in Chihuahua said that, ". . .José Ibarra used terrorist methods against the peasants asking for land in the Madera region."

Based on the demands to enlarge the ejidos (the common public lands) or to

create new areas for housing, General Gómez Velasco declared, "there arose the first difficulties with the rancher José Ibarra, who is responsible, according to the investigations that have been carried out, for the agitation and possibly some bloodshed that has resulted in various deaths." (*Norte de Chihuahua* July 21, 1964)

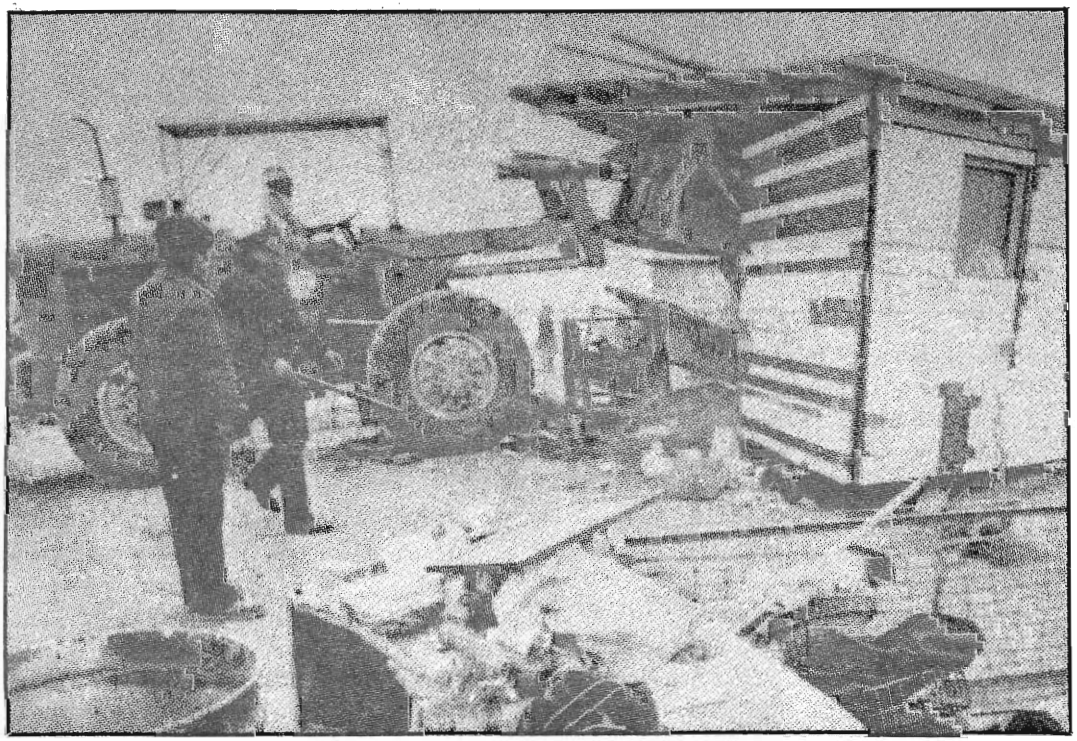
José Melgar de la Peña, State's Attorney for Chihuahua, brought to light a series of accusations against the Ibarra family. The accusations pointed to the Ibarras as a source of the climate of violence prevailing in Ciudad Madera. The following are the main points of the accusations made by the State's Attorney and published in *Norte de Chihuahua* on July 28, 1964:

On July 11, 1959, José Ibarra Bojórquez killed Anselmo Enríquez Quintana. A jury in Matachic tried the case and an order for the arrest of Ibarra Bojórquez was issued, but was never served.

On September 4, 1959, Rubén Ibarra Amaya, son of Florentino Ibarra, mortally wounded Luís Mendoza, a Chihuahuan school teacher.

On November 26, 1959, Francisco Luján Adame, another school teacher, was killed by Encarnación García Muñoz, by order of the Ibarra brothers. Encarnación was sentenced to 8 years, 6 months in prison.

On March 18, 1960, Florentino Ibarra, brother of José Ibarra, killed Carlos



Mexican police bulldoze a shack built by peasants on land they occupied.

In the state of Hidalgo, campesinos march demanding control of the land and an end to terrorism by the large land owners.

Ríos Torres, a peasant, in a conflict over land. He was sentenced to 8 years in prison, but later was acquitted and set free.

On June 25, 1960, Jesús Márquez Kelli was convicted and sentenced to a month in prison and fined 100 pesos for death threats against Daniel Luján, Adame's son.

On August 13, 1961, José Ibarra was assaulted by Mariano Roscón and Manuel Ríos. The latter was the brother of Carlos Ríos Torres, who was killed by Florentino Ibarra.

On November 30, 1963, Salvador Gaytán was assaulted by Jesús and José Marquez. Jesús Marquez then fled.

On December 4, 1963, the representatives of the village of Huizopa were assaulted by Jesús and José Ibarra, en route from Dolores, Madera. Eleuterio Olivas was wounded in this attack.

Two days after these accusations were published, twenty members of the Ibarra family (José among them) went to the newspapers in Chihuahua to respond to the State's Attorney.

They asked for an investigation, "so that everyone is put in his place."

They blamed the brothers Luis and Amador Estrella for the agitation in Madera, since it was they who led the peasants who were asking for the Ibarras' lands.

"We have grazing lands that are on broken, uneven soil," declared the Ibarras, "and we bought them legally from Bosques de Chihuahua."

They agreed that Florentino Ibarra had killed Carlos Ríos, but only in self defense.

They denied that they had ordered the killing of the teacher Luján.

They swore that Eleuterio Olivas was wounded accidentally by Jesús Ibarra as he fired his weapon inside a store belonging to the Ibarra family.

They said that Rubén Ibarra Amaya had an altercation with Luis Mendoza over the question of girlfriends.

They did not mention other accusations: for example, that José Ibarra Bojórquez had killed Anselmo Enríquez Quintana.

On March 5, 1964 (four months before the accusations by the State's Attorney) Salomón Gaytán shot Florentino Ibarra, "as a response to his having killed the campesino Carlos Ríos to get him off the land . . ." according to Salvador Gaytán, Salomón's brother.

The Ibarras imposed their rule thanks to the support or toleration of the government of the state of Chihuahua. General Prázedes Giner Durán headed the Chihuahuan government when these struggles became more acute. A man overqualified to arouse popular hatred, he was obstinate and authoritarian, and he applied a heavy-handed policy that led to armed confrontations.

Arturo Gámiz and other campesino leaders of the Madera region, who were active in the General Union of Workers and Campesinos (UGOCM) – the central union that was directed by Jacinto López and directly linked to the Popular Socialist Party – entered into negotiations with the Governor in the hope that they could peacefully resolve the conflicts over possession of the land. "The Governor's responses never satisfied the campesino leaders. Sometimes there were bitter words exchanged between the Governor and Gámiz. One of these exchanges took place on the very grounds of the Government House." (*Norte de Chihuahua*, Sept. 24, 1965).

In this climate of violence sanctioned from above, the armed group headed by Arturo Gámiz was born. It was a small nucleus, poorly armed and untrained, which carried out sporadic actions. The timetable of the group's actions stretches from February of 1964 to September of 1965.

As one newspaper indicated, "the first sign of life of Arturo Gamiz's guerrilla group appeared at the end of February of 1964, when a bridge on the Ibarra property

was blown up with dynamite ..."

The day after Salomón Gaytán killed Florentino Ibarra, state Judicial Police and army detachments searched for the guerrillas in the mountains between Sonora and Chihuahua. Official reports said the guerrilla group was made up of 11 young men. On July 15, 1964 there was a gun fight between 5 Judicial Police and the guerrillas. The police were beaten: two were killed and three disarmed.

The police went after Gámiz's group. According to the official version, on July 15, 1964, the police agents were in the home of the deceased Florentino Ibarra, in Cebadilla de Dolores. One of them, Manuel Gómez, went out to the patio to get some water. While he was walking he was hit by a bullet. This began a gun fight between guerrillas and police that lasted 2 and one half hours (from 5:00 to 7:30 in the morning.)

The fight ended "when the park was emptied of police. Then the armed individuals approached the windows of the house and threw molotov bombs inside, starting a fire in the house. The flames and the smoke made the police agents come out with their hands up, surrendering to the group of aggressors." (***Norte de Chihuahua***, July 19, 1964). However, policeman Rito Caldera resisted surrendering. He came out of the house with an M-1 rifle in hand. They had to shoot him in one foot and a knee to subdue him.

The State Policemen, Rito Caldera and Manuel Gomez, who were both wounded, as well as Vicente Chávez, Fidel Hernandez and Armando Bustamante, were taken to the Presidential building in Dolores. They were left there with their hands and feet tied. After a few hours they were able to free themselves and publicized what had happened in a radio interview." (***Norte de Chihuahua***, July 19, 1964).

Almost a year later, on May 23, 1965, the armed group began to show renewed signs of life: they attacked a platoon of soldiers and several policemen. A radio transmitting station and 250 cartridges also fell into the hands of the attackers.

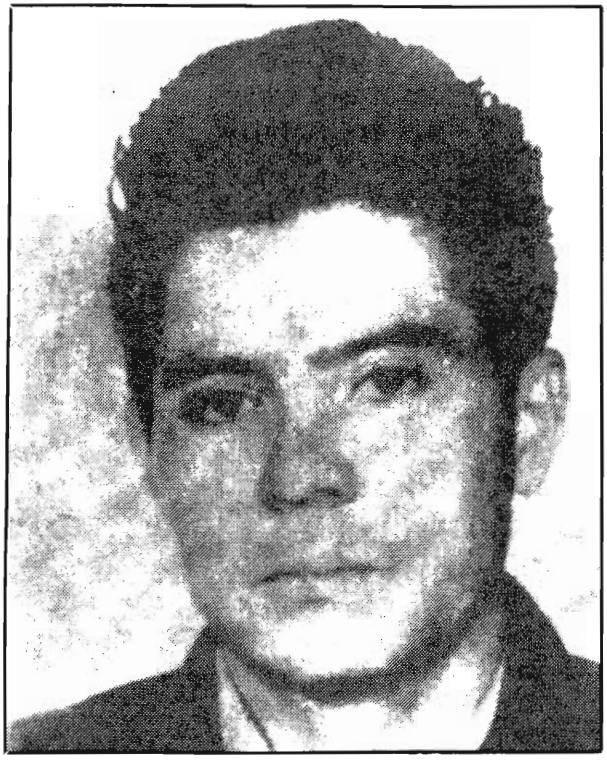
The action took place near Ciudad Madera. The soldiers and police received word that some land belonging to the Molina family had been occupied, and they were barely able to flee precipitously and in doing so they abandoned their military equipment.

Sergeant Antonio Martinez Marín was court-martialed for running away from combat. A journalist accidentally discovered the papers containing the charges and this was how the event was made public.

THE ASSAULT ON THE GARRISON OF CIUDAD MADERA

The last action of the guerrillas was the assault on the Headquarters of Ciudad Madera. Fourteen or sixteen men against a garrison of 120 soldiers with superior arms was an operation that had no practical possibilities of success.

Twelve days before the assault, Arturo Gámiz said in a letter to Governor Giner Durán, "For years, we have been asking for justice in a nice way; but you, Mr. Governor, have always dismissed us with insults; you have taken the side of the



Arturo Gamiz

landowners and given them rights and privileges. We took up arms to achieve with our own hands, the justice which is denied to the poor."

On September 21, 1965, Gamiz' group commandeered a truck driven by Dolores Lozano Paredes. They forced the driver to transport them to Ciudad Madera. They rested all day and continued the trip at night. According to Paredes, one kilometer before arriving at the garrison, 10 young men got out and moved towards the garrison. Another 3, plus the driver, went on to a wooded area 8 kilometers from Madera, to await the outcome of the attack.

The attack began between 5:00 and 6:00 on the morning of September 23, 1965. The combat lasted at most 3 hours. Eight of the attackers and 5 soldiers died during the armed attack. Ten soldiers and 3 civilians were wounded. The civilians did not belong to the guerrilla group; they were hit accidentally by stray bullets while they were near the scene of the battle. Of the wounded only one soldier and one civilian died, two days after the assault.

The exact number of people involved in that action is a mystery. According to journalistic reports, the calculations of witnesses, and the more diverse rumors that circulated in those days, the number of attackers fluctuated between 14 and 17.

By this kind of count, we can suppose that 6 to 9 guerrillas fled to the mountains. Some, perhaps, were wounded. After the assault, Governor Giner Durán stated, "It all comes down to a riot by some lunatics acting on bad counsel from Gámiz and Doctor Gomez." He had previously given orders that the guerrillas be buried without coffins. "Since they were fighting for the earth," he said, "let them have their fill of earth."

THE HUNT FOR THE GUERRILLAS

The Army undertook the search for the fugitives the same day as the assault occurred. Hundreds of soldiers from the military zones of Chihuahua and Sonora (more from the former) took part in the hunt, as well as 68 men from the Parachute Riflemen Battalion under the command of the then Colonel (now General) Jose Hernandez Toledo, the officer who years later directed the attacks against the universities of Sonora and Michoacan and against the rally in Tlateloco. Three C-54 airplanes and four T-33 attack jets also contributed to the search. Two of the jets carried the parachute forces to the cities of Chihuahua and Madera. In the attempt to find the fugitives the troops used terror tactics. One example: 7 campesinos from Cebadilla de Dolores, a town in the mountains, were tortured. General Gonzalo Bazán Guzmán commander of the 1st Infantry Battalion , headquartered in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua and head of the armed forces in the zone of Madera, confessed to journalist Victor Rico Galán at the end of the day of the assault on the garrison, that he was aware of the irregularities committed against the campesinos. The General thought they were "regrettable but necessary" excesses. But despite all of this, fugitives were not found.

The weapons used to carry out the assault were: "two 7 mm rifles, three 30-06 guns, 2 Mausers, a shotgun and two 22 caliber rifles, grenades taken from a platoon that had been ambushed in the mountains, cartridges of dynamite in iron tubes two inches in length and 'molotov' bombs." *(El Heraldo de Chihuahua,* Sept. 24, 1965). The same paper states that the Army used "even machine guns, but not grenades, since their objective was 'not to injure' innocent persons."

The Army casualties were the following: soldiers Felipe Reyna López, Jorge Velázques and Virginia Yáñez Gómez, Estrada Gómez and Moisés Bustillo Orozco and Lieutenant Marcelino Rigoberto Aguilar."

Armando Aguila, not involved in the battle, was also killed.

In reference to the deaths in the attack group, everything that is known up to now is very imprecise. Not all the bodies were completely identified. One day a list of the dead was published, another day another list appeared; in the midst of all this confusion, doubts began to arise even about the death of Arturo Gámiz. His mother recognized the body of her son Emilio, but she swore that Arturo's body was not among the dead. The local press broadcast these unclear reports. Thus, for example, *El Heraldo de Chihuahua* listed as of September 25th of 1965 Antonio Gaytán, Arturo

The state of Chihuahua has a long history of revolutionary activity. Pictured are women who fought with Pancho Villa's army in 1910.

Gámiz,Dr. Pablo Gómez Ramirez, Rafael Martínez, Valdivia Salomón Gaytán, Oscar Sandoval Salinas, Modesto Sierra, Olguín and Emilio Gámiz as the dead.They clarified that the first 6 were "duly identified," although the last two were not.

The same day, the newspaper *Norte de Chihuahua* stated that the bodies of the eight guerrillas had been buried the day before in a common grave. The soldiers were interred with military honors. They did not give a list of names as in *El Heraldo*. However, they stated that the body of Salomón Gaytán "was handed over to his family and was the only one who received an individual burial." They added that "four bodies were not identified" while *El Heraldo* said that only two had not been identified. To heighten the confusion, *Norte*, after describing how Salomón Gaytán was buried, wrote later that, according to the commander of the military zone, the one who had died was Antonio Gaytán and not Salomón.

Heraldo printed, on September 28, that one of the dead was Manuel Peña Gamález. A military agent of the Public Ministry, Lieutenant Colonel Jorge Díaz Arellano, was cited as the source of information.

THE PERSONALITIES

However, it is undoubtable that the two main leaders of the group lost their lives: Arturo Gámiz and Doctor Pablo Gómez.

Since its foundation at the end of 1963, Arturo Gámiz directed the armed group. This group was formed, for the most part, of very young men between the ages of 20 and 25. The only exception was Doctor Pablo Gómez. To give an idea of the people who participated in the group, some data follows.

Gámiz joined the Popular Party (today the Popular Socialist Party) in 1956. He organized the Popular Youth in the community of La Junta (today Adolfo López Mateos), Chihuahua. In September of 1959 he entered the Teachers School of the State of Chihuahua, where he met other restless and struggling young people. Together, they decided to go work in favor of the campesinos in the mountains. As a leader of the UGOCM, he led various mobilizations of campesinos in the Madera region. After several years of demands, demonstrations, protests and peasant actions, as well as confronting the resulting repression, Gámiz concluded that the road ordinarily labeled peaceful was ineffective. He expressed his feelings as follows:

> We are convinced that our enemies respect no one and nothing except the rifle.
>
> We are convinced that the moment has arrived to speak to those in power in the only language they understand; the hour has arrived when the most daring vanguards will take up the rifle; the hour has arrived to see if clubs will penetrate their heads, since reason never did; the hour has arrived to support ourselves with the 30-30 and the 30-06, more than the Agrarian Code of the Constitution. *(Sucesos,* October 24, 1975).

One month before the assault on the garrison Pablo Gómez joined the group. Gómez was from Saucillo, Chihuahua, a prominent and very active member of the Popular Socialist Party and the Chihuahua UGOCM. A teacher and a doctor, who practiced both professions in the rural areas of his state. His knowledge of the problems of the campesinos and his connection with them arose from this work.

Also part of the group were:

Miguel Quiñones Pednoya, born in 1943, was a director of the rural school of Ariseachic (a village in the mountains of the Tarahumara) when he joined the guerrilla group. He was a member of the National Council of Socialist Peasant Students. Emilio Gámiz, Arturo's brother, was a founder of the group and a militant in the Popular Youth.

Salvador Gaytán, was a sectional president for Dolores, a mining site near Ciudad Madera and near the state of Sonora. He left his position to join his brother Salomón and Arturo Gámiz. Salvador said once that his brother Salomón "was 22 when he died in Madera" and that "(Salomón) began to struggle when he was 14..."

Oscar Sandoval Salinas, 19 years old, was the youngest of all. In 1965 he was in the fifth year of the Normal School of the State of Chihuahua.

PROGRAM

The group from Ciudad Madera, according to what we know up until now, never elaborated a program; or rather, they never put out such a document. Their political positions -- at least to the extent we know them -- did not fundamentally differ from those of the PPS, the party to which most of the group belonged. Because of this, the group's political vision was very regional and their main preoccupation was the agrarian problem. Gámiz wrote on this theme and we can consider his ideas as representative of the group's.

Gámiz believed the land should be distributed and at the same time preserve the bases established for rural industrialization; agricultural production should raise the standard of living for the peasants; the Agrarian Reform should be an instrument of economic and political independence; there should be a national plan for agriculture, cattle raising and forestry aimed at raising productivity and the establishment of rural industries that would complement the economy of the ejidos (the peasant communal farming); the latter must be guaranteed credit, adequate technology and the necessary elements to raise productivity.

CHAPTER II
National Revolutionary Civic Association (ACNR)

The two most important guerrilla movements of this decade were born in the state of Guerrero: the first headed by Genaro Vázquez and the other by Lucio Cabañas. They emerged in a state which has often been called the champion of backwardness. According to Moisés Ochoa Campos in his book "***Guerrero: análisis de un estado como problema (Guerrero, Analysis of a State as a Problem***, Editorial A. Trillas, Mexico, 1964):

> This state has won several distinctions; for example, in 1950, they won 1st prize in illiteracy and in having the largest number of their labor force employed in agriculture; in 1955, they held 19th place in industrialization and 25th in production. In 1960, the percentage of illiteracy was 62.81 percent, but in 1970 the percentage of illiteracy had decreased to 45 percent. It is a highly agricultural state but one that only produces 1 percent of the national agricultural products and has a very low level of productivity. The standard of living is below the national average, as revealed in a study done by the PRI. In addition to poverty and ignorance, there is the cacique (the local boss) who "owes his influence to his economic position." His prominent position as a wealthy person causes many to accept his authority and advice. The worst are those who support themselves through terror. (*Guerrero: Analisis de un estado como problema,* pp. 36-37.)

And terror is a weapon which is used not only by bosses but by all the politicians beginning with the State Governor. Because of this, they have also won another distinction, that of murder. To illustrate, here are several examples: the murder carried out by Caballero Aburto's regime in the last months of 1960; the murder in Atoyac in 1967 and of the coconut workers in Acapulco which took place that same year. All these factors have created a violent atmosphere and a certain political instability which manifests itself in open and secret apparatus.

In this climate, guerrilla organizations flourished from the late 1960s until the early 1970s. The organizations which preceded the guerrilla groups at first used peaceful forms of struggle. However, in the course of their development they became armed groups. Such is the case with the National Civic Revolutionary Association, which initially was called the Guerrero Civic Association. All signs indicate that it was formed in 1959 to struggle against the policies of General Raúl Caballero Aburto, who was then Governor of the State of Guerrero.

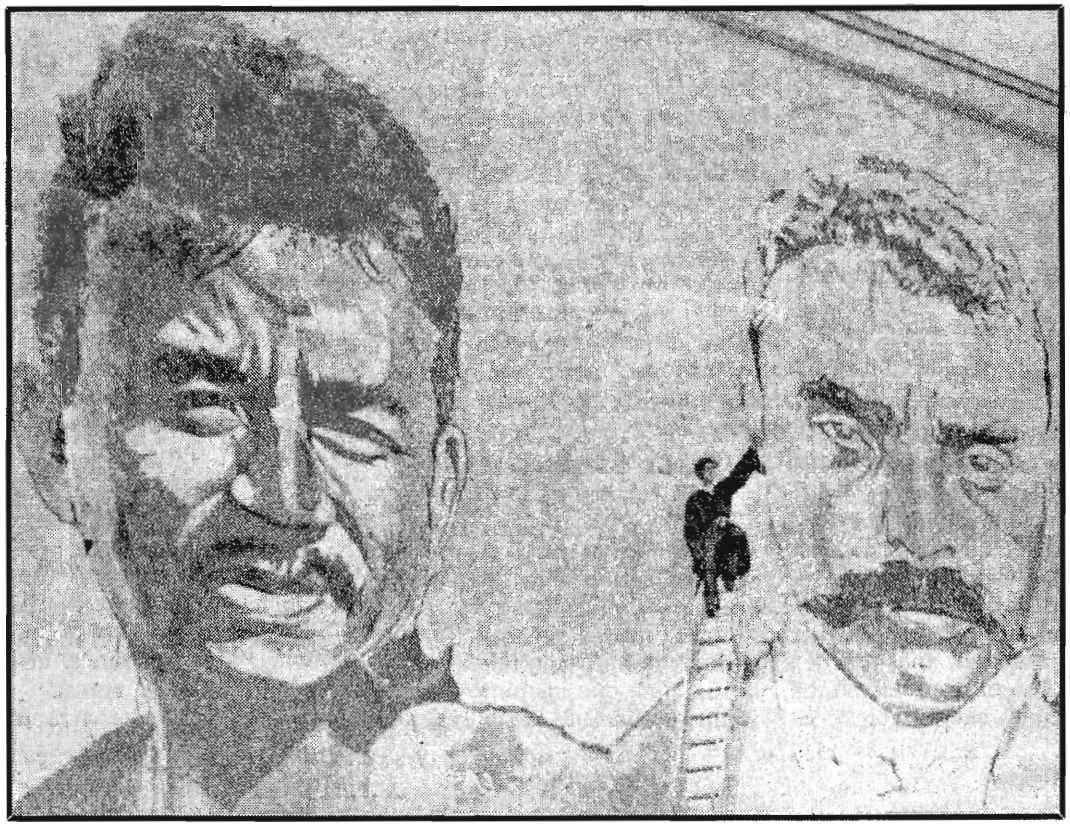
The most distinguished leader of this organization was Genaro Vázquez Rojas. In 1971, Genaro Vázquez, during an interview in the magazine *¿Por Qué?* briefly gave his autobiography:

> I'm from San Luis Acatlón, municipality of Tlalistlahuaca in Guerrero. I'm 38 years old and I am the son of a peasant leader. Since my youth, I attended meetings with my father and small landholders. I studied at the boarding school

Francisco I. Madero, in Mexico City. From there I went to secondary school Rafael Dondé and then to the preparatory school of San Ildefonso, the National Teachers School and the Law School of the Autonomous National University of Mexico.

During my studies and then in my profession, I never lost contact with the people of Guerrero. They always told me their problems and named me as their representative to the Department of Agriculture.

To dedicate myself completely to solving agrarian problems, I gave up my position as a teacher and took responsibility for the peasants associations in my State. In 1959, the Unions UPA, UPIC, ULAC, and UTP, made up of coconut workers, coffee workers, sesame seed workers and palm workers formed the Civic Association of Guerrero (CAG), whose members were known as 'civicos'.



Genaro Vasquez and Emiliano Zapata

Repression of student movement in 1968.

The CAG mobilized the people against the arbitrary government of General Raul Caballero Aburto, who was removed; they also energetically protested the low prices that North American companies, represented by caciques in the region, paid for the peasants' products. (Genaro Vázquez, Prologue and Selection by Orlando Ortiz, ***Editorial Diógenes,*** pp. 73-74.)

The struggle against Caballero Aburto made the Guerrero Civic Association well-known and also strengthened it politically. The spark which lit the flame was the student strike against the President of the University of Guerrero, Alfonso Ramirez Altamirano, which began on October 20, 1960. On October 25th, in front of the of the Governor's house, a crowd of 4,000 asked for the withdrawal of the police. All these events took place in Chilpancingo.

On October 27, 1960,the ***Cámara de Diputados de la Union***(Municipal Government) heard charges lodged against Caballero Aburto. Thirty-four groups of youth, peasants, and workers signed the document, among them the following: Guerrero Civic Association, Zapatista Front of Guerrero, Alumni Association of the Law School of the UNAM, Guerrero University Front, National Confederation of Mexican Youth, National Revolutionary Coalition, Rural Teachers School of Ayotzinopa,

Union of Geniune Coconut Workers of Both Coasts of Guerrero, Association of Coffee Workers of Guerrero, Regional Peasants Committee of Atoyac, Union of Telephone Workers and Electricians (Guerrero Section). They accused Caballero Aburto of "homocide, attacks against individual rights, unjustified acquisition of money, robbery, fires and nepotism and for personally taking over all the other state powers or having his family exercise them." *(Excélsior* Newspaper, October 28, 1960)

According to the magazine ***Política*** (January 15, 1961) Caballero Aburto won the governorship by having distinguished himself through his repression of the supporters of General Miguel Henriquez Guzmán (candidate for the Presidency of the Republic in 1952), especially on July 7, 1952, a day in which huge numbers of Henriquez's supporters were massacred in the main plaza of Mexico City.

Regarding the multiple and serious accusations against Caballero Aburto, ***Política*** (December 1, 1960) stated:

> Thirty-four cases of murder were listed. This honorable House, with the resources at its disposal, could also prove that hundreds more crimes have been committed by members of the state government.
>
> The accusers also published a long list of property owned by the governor, who upon becoming governor of the State of Guerrero only owned one house in Mexico City, one in Puebla and a ranch in Veracruz .
>
> After three years of governship, Caballero Aburto owned more than thirty furnished houses, among them the Hacienda La Margelia, in the municipality of San Luis Acatlán, Guerrero, worth 10 million pesos and a ranch in Veracruz valued at more than 12 million pesos. Most of this property - houses, land, ranches, farms etc. - was registered in the name of the governor's wife, Margarita E. de Caballero or his daughter, Silvia, although some were also in his name. The denunciation of the illegitimate acquisitions of wealth by the governor is based on the Public Registry of Property in which the huge quantity of goods owned by the family is listed.
>
> Many of the governor's relatives had official jobs which were given to them by him. A special case is that of Enrique Caballero Aburto, who was the rent collector for Acapulco. Forced to get rid of him because of the people's protest, Raul Caballero Aburto named him his "official representative for the whole state." The accusations against Carlos Aburto came to nothing. The legislators stated:
>
> 'This Camara de Diputados de la Union is unable to set ourselves up as a Grand Jury to hear the accusation which has been made against the constitutional governor of Guerrero, because this accusation could constitute a crime or a violation of the Constitution and laws of the state of Guerrero. The Legislative and Judicial powers have jurisdiction over this matter.' (*Politica* January 25, 1961).

What really put Caballero Aburto's government in check were the street actions,

which continued. On October 31st, the ***Excélsior*** mentioned a demonstration which had taken place in front of the governor's house in Chilpancingo. Five thousand people flocked to the entrance of the house, determined to "not leave here until Governor Caballero Arturo falls and his power is taken away." Among the leaders of this demonstration was Genaro Vázquez Rojas. On November 25th, the Army entered the scene. They took over the University, dispersed the permanent assembly in front of the governor's house and arrested 100 people. The magazine ***Política*** (December 1, 1960) said the following:

> When they entered the circle at the University, the crowd was broken up and a little later, thousands of people tried to cross the soldiers' lines to join the students, but it was impossible. The troops cut the electric and telephone lines and the water supply for the University. Anyone who wanted to leave was allowed to do so, but no one could get close to the building. That way, they hoped to end the student strike and eliminate the final point of popular opposition to the Governor.
>
> The Army's action was interpreted as a demonstration of the federal government's force, and it came after the refusal of the ***Cámara de Diputados de la Union*** to deal with the conflict.
>
> For more than a month, Caballero Aburto could not set foot in Chilpancingo, because he was afraid that his presence would provoke serious disturbances. The members of the city Council stated their opposition to him. The Superior Court of Justice was disintegrating. The local ***Cámara de Diputados*** did not meet. Businessmen's strikes were carried out in several areas in Guerrero. The public employees had shown their repudiation of the government. The demonstrations and meetings grew and this increased popular discontent.

After the Army's intervention, the problem became more serious. There was no retreat; the people continued to struggle. According to ***Excélsior*** (November 21 1960), there were 500 small businessmen from Chilpancingo on strike and 23,000 in the entire state. According to the same newspaper, the larger businessmen of Chilpancingo, Acapulco, Tierra Colorada and Tasco were also on strike. The taxpayers and public employees were also striking. According to ***Excélsior*** (December 28 1960), the situation was the following:

> The City Councils of Chilpancingo, Tixtla, Chilapo, Zumpango del Rio, Tasco, Apango, Huitzuco and Tenango del Rio have refused to recognize the government of General Raul Caballero Aburto.
>
> Meanwhile, in Tierra Colorada, the municipal authorities were thrown out. The people took over the City Council and disarmed the police.
>
> In Tasco, the taxpayers went on strike and the magistrates protected themselves from actions by the State's governor.
>
> In Chilpancingo, 800 public employees declared that they would continue

with the plan to overthrow the local government. The bureaucrats had not been paid for two months.

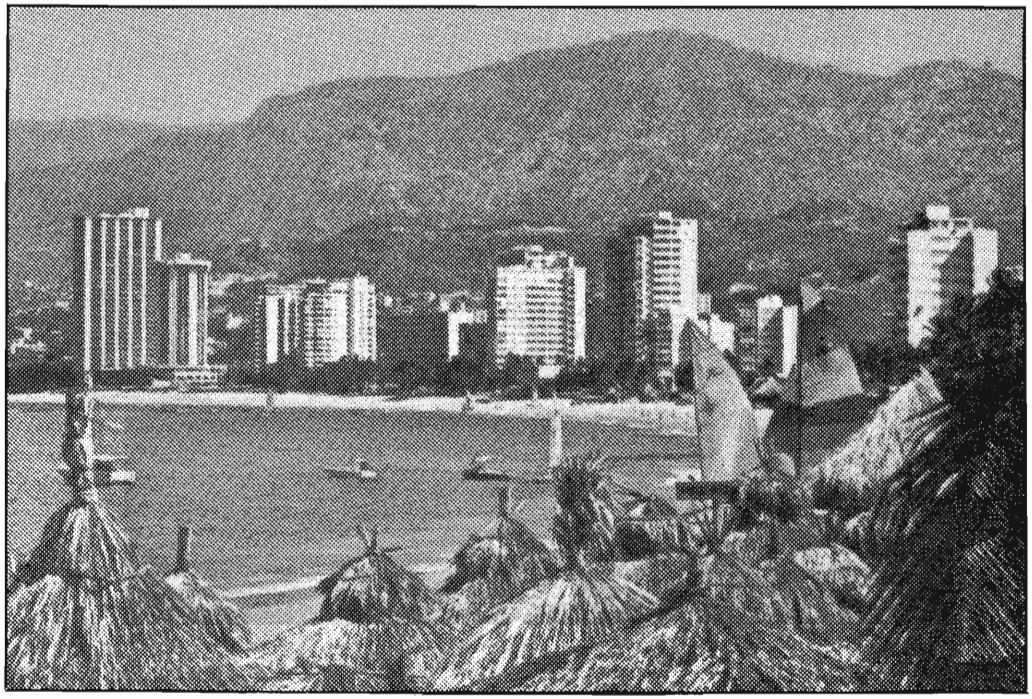
The police, supported by the Army, have been holding the students captive for more than 3 days, in the University of Guerrero building.

The National Chamber of Commerce of Chilpancingo reaffirmed their opposition to the local government, and the small businessmen put a banner in Guerrero Street which stated that they would not resume business until power was removed from the hands of the State.

The local deputies are the only people who supported Governor Caballero Aburto.

On January 4, 1961, the Permanent Commission of the ***Congreso de la Unión*** made official what was already a fact: the change of power in Guerrero. They replaced Caballero Aburto with the lawyer Arturo Martínez Adame, who was then Minister of the Supreme Court of Justice of Mexico.

Genaro Vasquez speaking at a Civic Association of Guerrero rally.



Luxury tourist hotels line the beach of Acapulco in the state of Guerrero . . . . .

What precipitated the fall of Caballero Aburto was the massacre carried out by the 6th and 24th Army batallions against the citizens who had been gathered for several weeks in front of the Governor's house and the University. There are several contradictory versions about how the exchange of fire began. The Army, as always, blamed the people. The fact is that the soldiers opened fire on thousands of people. The results were: 13 dead and 37 wounded, the price which had to be paid to get rid of Caballero Aburto. At that time, the Civic Association of Guerrero was very powerful. For a short period, they were able to put their people in power and make the decisions. The PRI had been undone, relatively speaking, but it regained control rapidly. They were willing to tolerate the ACG until things became normalized. Then the ACG would either integrate itself, that is to say, become submissive, or play their own game and become the opposition. They chose the second path. From that moment, the ACG was subjected to a tremendous offensive. Those in power used all their resources to get rid of the ACG. The strongest attack was begun during the state elections in 1962. This was election year for the governor, local deputies and City Council.

Without waiting for the governor's electoral machine to put out their candidates, the ACG put out theirs. They entered candidates for deputies in the eleven electoral districts and for mayor in the municipalities of Guerrero. Their candidate for governor was the lawyer José Maria Suárez Téllez. The Magazine ***Política*** (September 1, 1962), said about him,

> For more than 40 years, since 1921, he has struggled with a determination and unbreakable conviction for agrarian Reform. In that year, he worked as an administrative employee in the delegation of the National Agrarian Commission of Guerrero and he won well-deserved fame for being incorruptible. Then he studied at the Free School of Law and as a lawyer, has always been there to serve the peasants. He was a Federal Deputy and Attorney General for Guerrero during the governorship of General and Engineer Rafael Catalán Clavo (1941-1945.) He has been a distinguished member, since its founding, in the ranks of the Zapatista Front.

The magazine added that after the announcement of the candidacy of Attorney Suárez Téllez, it was found out that the PRI had put forward Doctor Raymundo Aborca Alarcón "who the people of Guerrero believed was chosen by the lawyer Donato Miranda Fonseca, secretary of the President of the Republic." The same publication pointed out that " Doctor Abarca is a doctor who has been in practice for several years in Iguala. He was the Municipal President of this city during the government of General Baltasar Leyva Mancilla (1945-1951). Outside his clientele, nobody knew him in Guerrero."

. . . . . while in nearby colonias children live in squalor.

A hostile atmosphere was created against the ACG. The press was mainly responsible for that. Members of the ACG were called "civico-locos." Their demonstrations were called riots. They attempted a smear campaign against them, and fostered the idea that the "civicos" were seditious. One of the magazines which distinguished itself in this campaign was *El Correo* of Iguala.

"On Sunday morning," they wrote September 8, 1962, "civico-locos will hold their eleventh riot in the city of Iguala. They have named as their candidate for State governor, attorney José María Téllez, despite the fact that their own people have defeated them due to the dirty deals and tricks they use to fool the unwary."

On September 28, 1962, *El Correo* wrote:

> In Guerrero, there are individuals who say they are members of a phantom Civic Association. They go to the neighborhoods on Sunday to take advantage of the crowds in the plaza, solely to insult members of the PRI . . .They try to surprise the people in neighboring Tierra Caliente, Costa Grande, Costa Chica, in the western and northern parts of Guerrero, telling them lies and calling on them to rebel. . .
>
> These unscrupulous people try with their Sunday gatherings to provoke the candidates and the people into feeling that they are persecuted, a persecution they themselves are creating . . .

Why were the activists of the ACG unscrupulous? Which candidate did they provoke and why? In reality, from all this confusion, this group of mixed up ideas, spun with the clumsiness worthy of a Mexican journalist, what stood out was what needed to stand out -- the threat against the ACG.

"This organization doesn't represent any political party, and it certainly isn't registered with any agency of the federal government." Thus, "every activity that occurred during the primaries, should only be seen as one more crime committed by the peoples' enemies." (*El Correo*, December 5, 1962).

On election day, December 2, 1962, the magazine *Política* (January 1, 1963), said: "(The elections) developed according to the normal procedure in Mexico: forced voting; electoral fraud, etc., and immediately a repressive campaign against the ACG was carried out." Suàrez Tèllez was arrested for several hours together with some of his fellow workers. " In the following days," said the magazine, " arrests continued in different areas of the State. Army forces prohibited protests against the electoral fraud and, in violation of the constitution, arrested dozens of members of the ACG, especially in the area of Costa Grande."

The above-mentioned were only preliminary actions building towards a far-reaching and repressive coup which would destroy the ACG.

"...It is known," said *El Correo* (December 22, 1962), "that on the 26, 27, and 28 of this month the 'civico-locos' will be arrested."

On December 28, *El Correo* stated:

> Everything is ready to begin joint action by the state and federal government against the professional trouble-makers who, beginning tomorrow morning, under the pretense of commemorating the second anniversary of "the fallen" in Chilpancingo, are trying to initiate a series of subversive acts. They have said that they will seize municipal power in the 75 city councils through blood and fire. This will cause a series of arrests that at the same time will provoke the flight of many of the so-called "civicos."
>
> The general overview as of yesterday afternoon presented the following aspects:
>
> 1. The army guards took over the main entrance to the town hall of Iguala to stop the removal of documents or the entry of arms. . .
>
> 2. The "Civico-loco" agitators prepared to set up civic reviewing stands next Monday from 4:00 on, in front of the town halls of Iguala, Tlapehuala, Atoyac, San Gerónimo, Tecpan, Petatlán, Chilpancingo, Chilapa, Teloloapan, Apaxtla, Acapulco and Arcelia.

The blow against the ACG came on December 31, 1962. At dawn on the 31st, a shootout took place in front of the Town Hall where 3,000 people were meeting. According to *El Correo*, the people at the meeting "attacked the army and the police" when they asked the people not to take over the Town Hall. Suárez Téllez, who was in the civic reviewing stands said to *El Correo:* "The army and police attacked us when we were singing peacefully to guitar music...My conscience is clear, even though there were some deaths." *Política's* version was also different from *El Correo's*. They stated that "the massacre was prepared by the authorities." It said that the people gathered in front of the Town Hall of Iguala were surrounded by the police and the army on December 30, 1962 at 11:30. While maintaining the blockage Victorico López Figueroa (nicknamed "the Onion,"ex-mayor of Iguala, twice a local deputy, director of police, and financial scretary of the League of Agrarian Communities of Guerrero during the government of General Caballero Aburto), "waved a gun and challenged Professor Genaro Vázquez Rojas, president of the ACG, to a duel to death. When no one replied, he fired into the air -- a signal to begin the massacre. "

Six died, four were wounded and 156 arrested.

Furthermore, the magazine *Política* published a list of many other attacks carried out on the same day throughout Guerrero. They denounced a massacre perpetrated by the police and army in Ometepec and arrests in San Luis, as well as in Costa Chica, which was under state of siege. Similar events took place in Costa Grande.

The attack waged against the ACG was very severe. The ACG's most important leaders were in prison or outside of Guerrero. Genaro Vázquez, for example was forced to leave the state because he, along with other leaders, were being charged with the massacre of Iguala. Suárez Téllez and 25 civilians were tried for homicide,

injury, firing weapons and sedition. Little by little they were released. The last to be released was Suárez Téllez on November 26, 1963. As a result of all this, the ACG's activity was greatly reduced. These problems were compounded by the arrest of their principal leader, Genaro Vázquez on November 9, 1966. He was arrested in Mexico City at 1:00 as he left the office of his friends. Below are Genaro's own words, published in *El Correo* (November 12, 1966):

> Three agents, who I presume were from the State Police and Mexico City Secret Service, told me not to make a move and to surrender myself. I, naturally, reacted by asking what was going on and by asking these men to identify themselves. In reply, they then grabbed me and put me in the car.
>
> We traveled through the city and then they forced me to get out of the car into a locked van bearing no official seal. They handcuffed me and I sensed that we were traveling toward Tlalpan. When we reached the destination I was moved again to Guerrero.
>
> We arrived at the gas station, located at the entrance to Chilpancingo, at 6:30 p.m. Six police patrols were waiting for me there. I was taken to the Penitentiary and until my transfer, I was thrown into the basement, where they said 'here is where your cause is based'. To this I responded with my characteristic strength.
>
> Yesterday, before being transferred here, the Chief of Pre-Trial Investigations interrogated me about Guerrero Civic Association documents. Since I had been responding to questions in a forthright manner, saying that they were prejudiced against me and posed questions that tended to aggravate my situation and thus justify my obviously illegal arrest.
>
> The declaration ends in the following fashion:
>
> Now, when I am no longer being held incommunicado, I would like to take the opportunity to say to my people: continue to struggle for your rights, well-being and progress, for this is the only path to liberation . . . And to my friends and compañeros: continue to build the people's organization.

Why was Genaro Vázquez arrested three years after the events of Iguala? Why, asked *El Correo,* was he not arrested when he was organizing meetings and demonstrations, at a time when Abarca Alarcón was first beginning his constitutional functions?

An arrest warrant for Genaro Vázquez had been issued three years before, and there were many opportunities when it could have been served. But it was served during the growth of the student strikes – one strike against the rector of the University of Guerrero, Vergilio Gómez Moharro, who the students accused of siphoning off university funds (the rector fell following a long struggle); the other in the Rural Teacher's School of Ayotzinopa in support of the university strikes. The warrant of arrest was retained as a continual threat to Genaro Vázquez, as is often the case

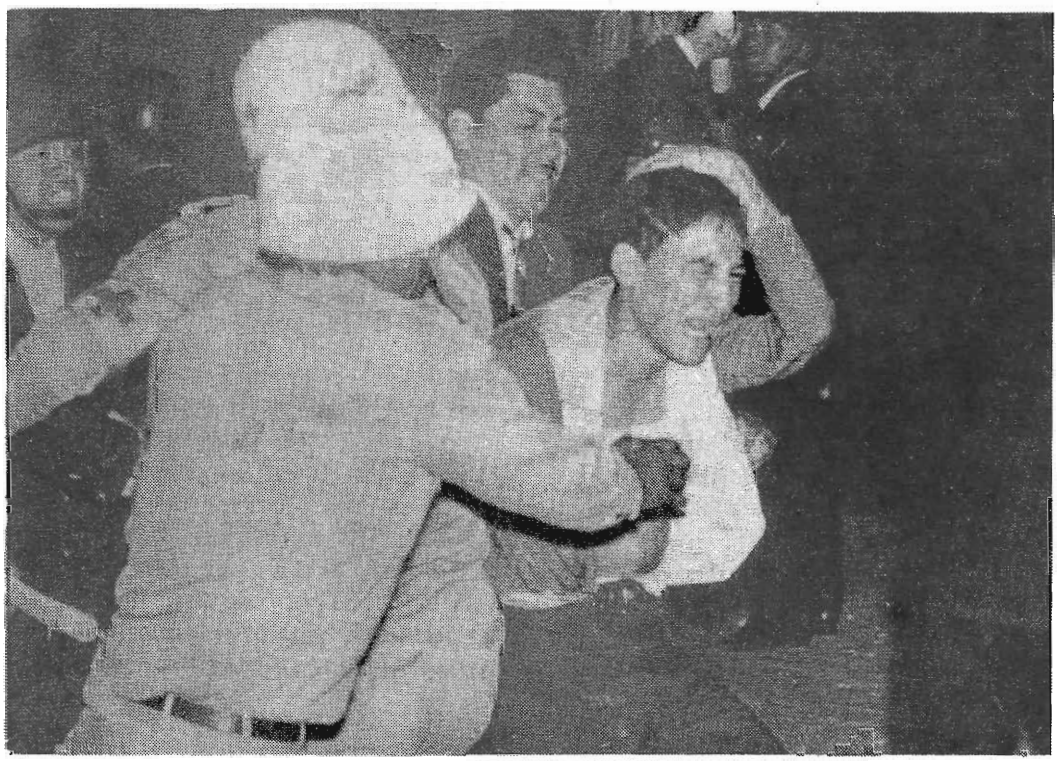
with warrants against opposition figures, to be activated when the political situation warrants it.

On November 16 (according to *El Correo),* Genaro was formally arrested and charged with murder, resisting arrest, injuries, defamation and threatening public employees and police agents.

Genaro felt very threatened in Chilpancingo jail, as was demonstrated by his statement of December 10, 1966 in *El Correo,* asking for the protection of federal justice because he feared "the state governor would order him killed." The newspaper added a very interesting fact: "different groups of people continually visited Genaro Vázquez Rojas yesterday, including one from Colonia Guadalupe in Iguala, but the topics discussed with the imprisoned civic leader were not made public . . "

A year and a half later Genaro Vázquez escaped from the Iguala prison, with help from the outside. He later explained how.

> "The Guerrero Civic Association realized that I needed to be liberated and ordered the formation of the first armed commando which took charge of the operation.



Vicious PRI government repression against the mass movements of the 1960's.

On April 22, 1968, under fire, in broad daylight, they rescued me from the Iguala police. Two agents died and the leader of the commando group, Roque Salgado, was seriously wounded. In spite of his wounds he continued to fight and died heroically fighting the army, which had ambushed us in the village of Icatepec near Iguala. The disparity in numbers was impressive: 10 soldiers to each of us. We mourn only the death of Roque.

Since my escape, the soldiers carried out thorough searches of all the ranches and encircled the area, but with the support of the peasants, we were able to elude them.

We were chased through the mountains for eight days. Finally, the hare overcame the fox." *(op. cit., Genaro Vázquez)*;

With Genaro Vázquez' escape, armed opposition began, ending peaceful opposition; in other words, a second stage in the development of the ACG began.

In the first stage the ACG acted peacefully. What did they achieve with this? ACG summarizes the results:

...it did not disorganize the government nor fix anything; it did demonstrate the fate reserved for those organizations that innocently follow the false democratic path offered by the exploiters and it demonstrated how these organizations are destroyed by brutal institutionalized military and police violence, by murder and imprisonment of those who are struggling ... Our struggle has turned to guerrilla organization to repel the aggression of the exploiting classes ... In Mexico we still cannot report any victory in the mass struggles; they have ended in repression against workers, peasants and the popular masses. *(Genaro Vázquez,* p. 215)

These conclusions are based on a truth that is impossible to deny. While the ACG acted without resorting to armed violence, the government tried to destroy them in one clean blow, to make their life impossible and to harass them. This led to two alternatives: submit or in other words join the system; or end it! The same has been experienced by all opposition forces in Mexico. Wasn't this what happened to Henriquismo; to Narismo in San Luis Potosí, the members of the Francisco I. Madero Party in Sinaloa and so many other movements which have tried to break the monolithic political system that prevails now?

They all began peacefully, emphasizing their pacifism and good behavior. However, they were all systematically accused of employing violent methods. All the reprisals are always blamed on the violent methods of the opposition. But in fact, the government is the only force which practices violence. It is a game they have played since the years of Porfirio Diaz. And they have achieved good results. In the case of the ACG, the government was not expecting a geniunely violent response; they never believed that the "civico-locos" they accused of wanting to overthrow the government by force would attempt to do just that.

Government policy was the greatest factor in the building of the guerrilla movement of the ACG. The violence of the rulers precipitated the violence of the

Guerrillas of the National Civic Revolutionary Association.

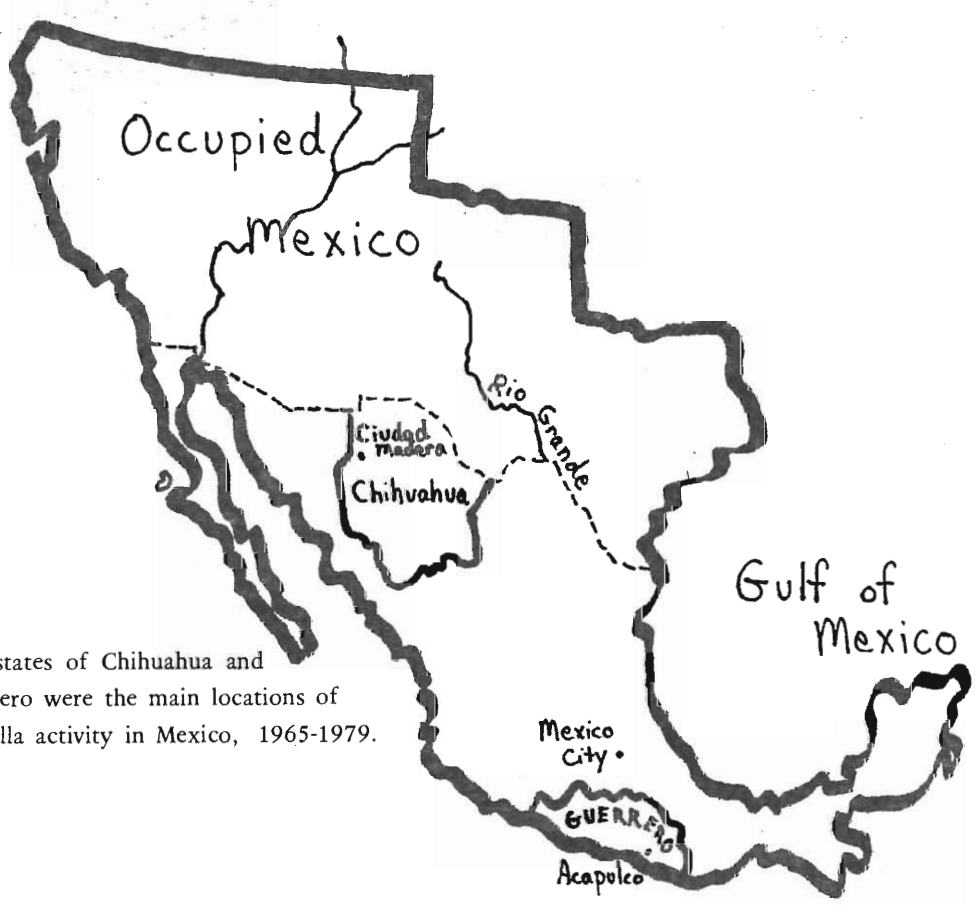
Guerrero Civic Association. But why now? Why hadn't this happened earlier? Because in addition to the internal, national factors, there was the influence of the victorious guerrilla action of the Cuban Revolution, the political theses (very popular in those years) and the actions of Che Guevara, and a certain relative and transitory upsurge of the Latin American guerrilla movement unfolding in Peru, Guatemala, Venezuela and Colombia. The center that spread this great guerrilla upsurge was Havana, with the speeches of Fidel Castro, the works of Che, the pamphlets and concepts of Regis Debray; the great international meetings like the Tricontinental Conference of the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, and the meeting of OLAS (Latin American Solidarity Organizations.) It was a combination of factors – but above all it was the internal conditions – that stimulated the formation of the guerrilla group led by GenaroVázquez. Experience was demonstrating to the nation that the practice of stoic suffering and martyred opposition was not working. It was degenerative, ineffective and offered no future. But did armed struggle offer any future? No one knew, but when was a better time to test it out? And it was tested, with no previous theorizing. It was simply the result, the conclusion of a long process; it was a combination of practical struggles. Politics is comprised more of experience, ability and skill than theory.

Thus a new civic association was born, not just for Guerrero, but national and revolutionary in character; not just there to take a beating, but to give one. It came to exercise a policy just as implacable as its enemy's policy.

MAIN ACTIONS OF THE ACNR

The Rector of the Autonomous University of Guerrero, Jaime Castrejón Díez was kidnapped on November 19, 1971 . In exchange for the Rector's freedom his captors demanded:

1) - liberty for the following political prisoners - Mario Menéndez Rodríguez, Glorentino James Hernández, Demosteres Onofre V., María Concepción Solís M., Ceferino Contreras V., Santos Menéndez B., Antonio Sotelo P., Ismael Brachoy, and Rafael Olea



The states of Chihuahua and Guerrero were the main locations of guerrilla activity in Mexico, 1965-1979.

2) two and one half million pesos and

3) "to put into the hands of the legal tribunals of justice all the campesinos suffering indefinite terms of detention in different Army garrisons under false accusations, taken from declarations obtained through torture, of their participation in our armed revolutionary movement; among others – José Garay, Francisco Garay, Sixto Flores, Cliserio de Jesús, Efren Gutierrez, Miguel García Marínez, José Ramírez, Crescencio Calderón, Mellado Martínez, Juan de Jesús, Hilda Flores, Eusebio Armenta, Marcos Saldaña, Angel Pizá y Justino Pizá."[2]

The first two conditions were fulfilled, but not the last. The political prisoners left as exiles to Havana on November 28. The Rector appeared safe and sound on December 1.

The kidnapping of Rector Castrejón Díez drew national attention because it occurred at a time when there was a great increase in bank robberies and kidnappings, A little more than a month earlier there had been the spectacular kidnapping of Julio Hirschfeld Almada, of whom we will say more later.

Approximately a year before (exactly December 29, 1970), the ACNR kidnapped Donaciaro Luna Radilla, head of the Banco Comercio del Sur. They demanded half a million pesos in ransom. The money was handed over on January 5, 1971 and three days later the banker was set free.

The ACNR acknowledged their participation in the banker's kidnapping as well as in "one of the bank robberies carried out in Mexico City by a group that operates in coordination with the Central Command in the mountains." *(Genaro Vázquez* p.83) They were referring to the assault on a truck from the Banco Comercial Mexicano on April 19, 1969 on the corner of Xola and the Fifth of February Streets. The loot: 3 million pesos which were later recovered by the police. Once in possession of the money, the assailants tried to flee in a stolen taxi, but the taxi broke down and they were stranded. Then the police arrived, headed by their chief, General Renato Vega Amador, pistol in hand. He was welcomed by a flash of machine-gun fire. Vega Amador fell badly wounded, as was his driver Miguel Mannory Suárez. Juan Antúnez, a member of the assault group died, and also José Saucedo Cadena, a secret service agent. In Coyuca de Catalán, Guerrero, Florentino Jaime Hernández was arrested, accused of having participated in the assault on the truck, as well as murdering the agent and wounding General Vega Amador. Jaime Hernández left – exiled to Cuba. He later formed part of the group exchanged for the Rector of the University of Guerrero, Jaime Castregón Díez.

It is known that Genaro Vázquez Rojas died on February 2, 1972 in an automobile accident near Morelia, Michoacán. His death absorbed the attention of the public. Since then, Genaro Vázquez has been converted from a human being into a myth, a poster, an angel – for some; a demon for others. He began to be seen as either the greatest or the worst.

The newspaper El Heraldo de Mexico organized a counterinsurgent campaign of discrediting and deflating the figure of Genaro Vázquez. Toward this end

they used the hypocrisy and puritanism especially characteristic of politicians active on the left. *El Heraldo* published some photographs in which Genaro Vázquez appeared with a woman. They were embracing in a feverish and erotic manner, and it seemed from their movements that they were just about to fall into bed. "Accompanying him," said the scandalized *El Heraldo,*" is not his wife, as we would hope from a hero, but (who do you think?) 'his lover.' " In other words: heroes, to be real heroes, only make love to their wives. And to top it off, the lady he was embracing was "a young girl of barely 19 for whose favors he would have to pay in gold." But that was not all. This libidinous scene took place in the thieves' mansion, Humboldt 610, in Cuernavaca, during a " revolutionary vacation". The conclusion was that the hero, the revolutionary, had not lost his sexual daring, and continued acting as a man of flesh and blood.

In the face of this, the opposite image was developed, one which propagated a picture of a super-virtuous and angelic Genaro Vázquez, with no faults. This was the image that the magazine *Por Que?* disseminated. Both images are, like everything else, made to serve propagandistic ends – mythical. They work not with a real man, but with a fetish, and examine him from extremes: identifying every defect or none. Both start from the same point of view. If he has defects (like his detractors say) he can be neither a hero nor a revolutionary (that is *El Heraldo's* position). "No!", reply the partisans; he is a revolutionary and a hero because he has no defects – he was a pure human being.

Beyond the extreme defenses and attacks, what interests us in this case is Genaro Vázquez as a political figure, not as a bedroom activist or Don Juan or a saint. And in this case the figure of Genaro Vázquez is important because he was the soul of the ACNR. This was proven because when he died the ACNR was practically extinguished.

If we compare the first period of the ACNR (when it was a peaceful opposition movement) with the second (when it was transformed into one of the armed opposition), we notice that they resemble each other in that both ended badly. They were unable to resist the repression of the bourgeoisie either as a peaceful or as an armed group. They were beaten in both forms. They lacked consistency. And one of their weaknesses seems to be that they functioned fundamentally around a *caudillo* (military chief). With the chief dead, the headless ACNR stopped moving. The ACNR did not operate on its own. Proof of this is that to date, not one of its members has been able to reactivate the organization.

Nevertheless, *caudillismo* sometimes has its advantages and manages to survive. Therefore *caudillismo* is not the major cause of the ACNR's failure. It is only one of them.

An important cause of the ACNR's failure, which is true for all Mexican guerrilla forces as well as a large part of the Latin American Left, is the lack of originality. If we closely examine the guerrilla movements which won, either Maoist or Castro-inspired, we will see that they were original and had a creative spirit. Maoism, for

example, rejected the advice of European Marxist-Leninists to work in cities, organize trade unions, strikes and participate in elections. On the contrary, Maoists centered their activity in rural areas, among the peasants, who made up the majority of the Chinese population, and carried out their activity through armed struggle, beginning with guerrilla warfare. The Cuban experience also contributed new ideas and practices, including armed struggle itself.

Really, the only new thing developed by the Mexican guerrilla, including Genaro Vázquez' group, was bank robbery and kidnapping. But these resources became worn out after repeated use – just as they demonstrated the limited imagination of guerrillas who never went beyond the kidnappings and holdups. It seemed as if the solution to all problems was the repetition of these two forms of struggle.

If opposition politics, in either of its forms, armed or unarmed, lack originality, we can be sure that they will not achieve their goal. This is true even if they begin to function well and to advance.

The National Revolutionary Civic Association summed up their basic goals in four points:

*The overthrow of the oligarchy made up of capitalists and pro-government imperialist landowners.

*The establishment of a coalition government composed of workers, peasants, students and progressive intellectuals.

*The political and economic independence of Mexico.

*The installation of a new social order that benefits the working masses of the country.

(In relation to these points and other programmatic aspects see *Genaro Vázquez* by Orlando Ortiz, pp.187-219.)

For the ACNR the 1910 Revolution only assured that,

> The benefits of power and national wealth are enjoyed by only a few. The workers, peasants and broad masses of working people were forced to suffer hunger, poverty and political subjugation. This was concretized with the formation of a neo-Porfirista regime, whose system continues to govern us through the oligarchy of capitalists and feudal landowners. These oligarchs dominate us politically, mortgage and turn over our nation to their North American Imperialist allies who rob us, and sink us into shameful neocolonialism.

According to the ACNR "the oligarchy has reached its historical point of development." They add that,

> The capitalists and feudal landowners who govern us, are allies of North American imperialism. They will never guarantee the people their rights or give us freedom and progress. Now is the time to create our own revolutionary political direction which will lead us to victory, the achievement of our desires for a more just life and total freedom. We will achieve this by means of a democratic, anti-imperialist,anti-feudal revolution,which is this second stage and,under the

political leadership of the proletariat, will lead towards the construction of socialism, the only system capable of assuring the freedom and well-being of the masses of working people.

The ACNR affirms that,

> Historically the proletarian political vanguard does not exist. In the current conditions of political illegality in the struggle for our people's liberation, it is not possible to create it – and even less under the legal system manipulated by the dominant oligarchy ... The experiences of other peoples struggling for liberation have demonstrated that the formation of a proletarian vanguard, in alliance with the poor peasantry, has been an armed formation. The experience of creating an armed political vanguard in the countryside and based on this, to develop the peoples capacity to wage armed struggle for their liberation is the correct perspective. It is the beginning step toward advancing in the Southern Mountains for all the honest revolutionaries in Mexico who truly seek the liberation of our homeland.

Referring to the kidnappings and their actions in general, ACNR says:

> These are the results of our revolutionary determination to answer blow for blow, the repression and reactionary violence imposed by the capitalists and pro-North American landowners. We believe it is absolutely just to oppose repression and the illegal deprivation of liberty that is exercised by the reactionary power of the rich against the dispossessed, with revolutionary action to punish known enemies of the people and to achieve our freedom and the growth of the revolutionary movement.

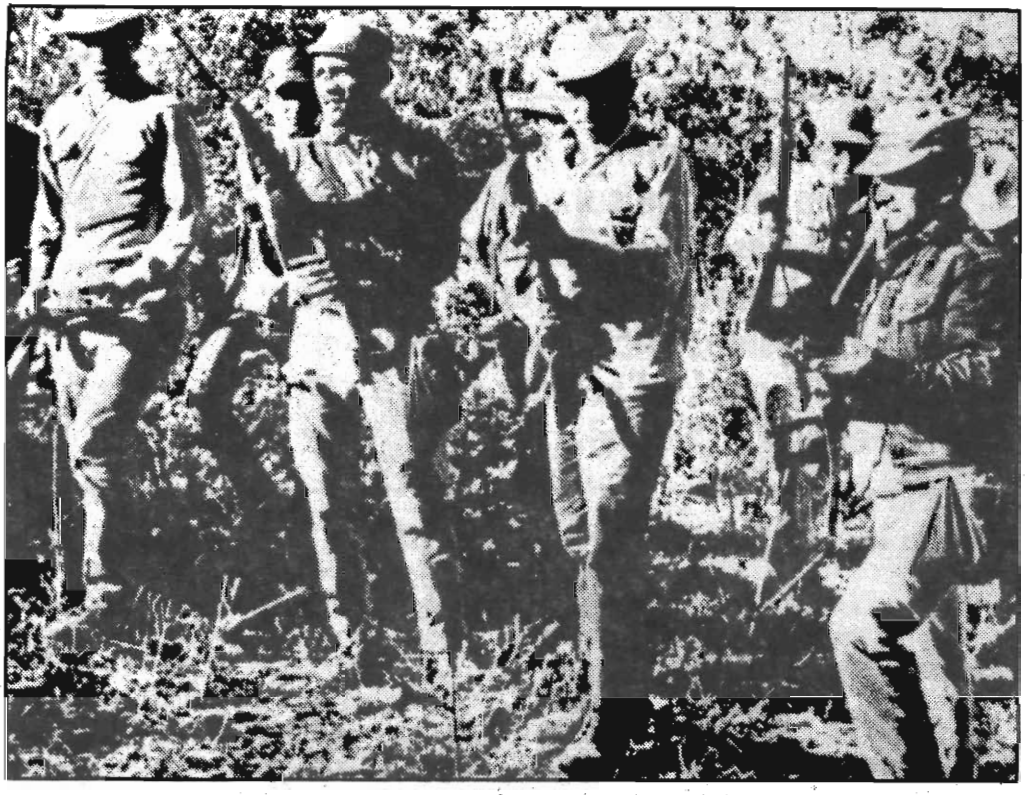
The leaders of ACNR added that their actions were not signs of impotence or desperation.

A few days before Genaro Vázquez's death, the ACNR, in a debate with reporter Victor Rico Galán and politician Heberto Castillo, wrote the following:

> From October 2, 1968 to June 10, 1971 the opportunity to organize politically and democratically has not existed. Whoever makes himself visible is openly or secretly cooperating with the government, or is deceiving himself. He will be identified, his organization penetrated, sabotaged and destroyed through provocation, multiple interferences or violence and imprisonment or through the physical suppression of the most outstanding members.

They add that:

> We are not individual terrorists or desperate groups of people who want to replace the masses. We are a guerrilla organization which operates on a national level, carries out bank expropriations, robs the opulent classes whose wealth is stolen from the Mexican people. Our actions, carried out on different levels, are geared to increasingly organize the masses to ever stronger actions against the opulent classes and the government. We are an active organization which devel-

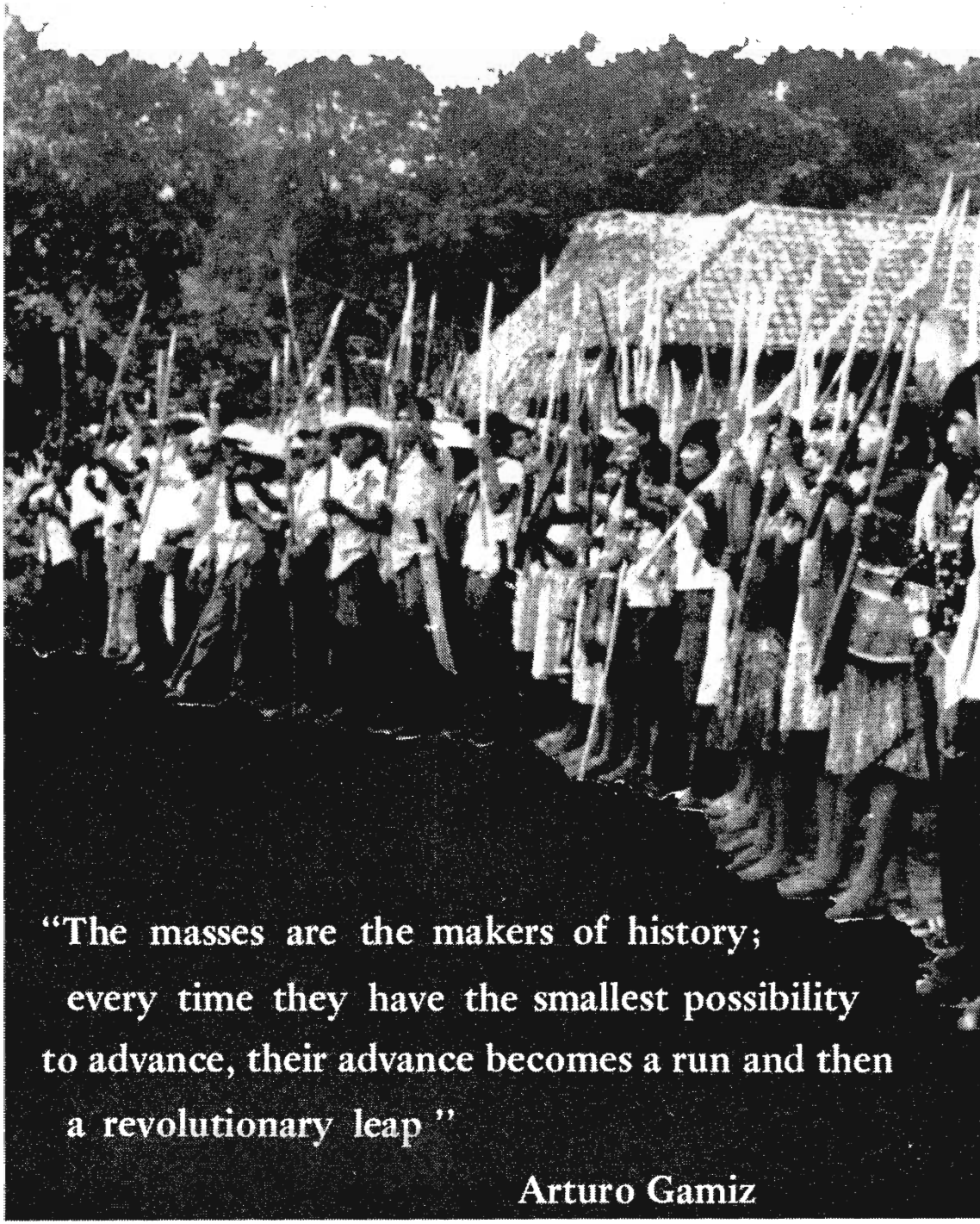


ops and grows along with the most advanced sectors, awakening popular support. It is normal that this kind of struggle will suffer reprisals and commit errors. We are faced with a criminal enemy which has the most modern forms of scientific repression and all the repressive technology developed by the international bourgeosie during two centuries at its disposal. For us, although tragic, these errors have provided us with experience and elevated our organizational capacity.

They point out something which is rarely considered regarding the ACNR:

Violence has been forced on us by murderers who govern and rob our people, then murder them when they protest or defend themselves. They are the ones who have made violence into a 'magic formula'.

We have organized our cells with the growing support, first of the peasants and rural workers, and today of urban sectors. Although they have been discovered carrying out revolutionary acts, they continue to organize and develop nationally and support the masses' struggle against the millionaire landowners and wealthy bureaucrats. They are bringing about the unmasking and the weakening of the government of national betrayal.


"The masses are the makers of history;
every time they have the smallest possibility
to advance, their advance becomes a run and then
a revolutionary leap"
Arturo Gamiz

CHAPTER III

LUCIO CABAÑAS: THE PARTY OF THE POOR OR THE ARMED COMMANDOS OF GUERRERO AND THE PEASANT BRIGADE OF JUSTICE

The history of this organization is directly tied to the political life of Lucio Cabañas, teacher in Modesta Alarcón, a federal school in Atoyac, Guerrero. In early 1965, Lucio Cabañas, along with Serafin Nuñez was exiled to Durango – although officially they were only sent to offer their services outside of Guerrero. The government had tried something similar before, but the parents of Atoyac had prevented it. Now, although these same parents mobilized, along with teachers and peasants, they were unable to prevent the exile. Why were they transferred from Atoyac to the rural school system of Tuitán, in the village of Nombre de Dios, Durango? So that, to quote the National Director of Federal Education, ***they wouldn't continue to agitate.*** A few days before they were expelled, on November 21, 1965, both teachers organized a planning meeting at Atoyac under the auspices of the now disappeared People's Electoral Front. In the meeting, they agreed to carry out a huge mass event to present a list of all the local problems to the new town council and demand solutions. While they were planning the demonstration, orders for their transfer arrived.

In Durango, both of the teachers Nuñez and Cabañas continued to agitate. This showed that they saw no other remedy.

They organized a group of more than 150 women. In the beginning of March, 1966, 60 of them, led by the two teachers, went to see the governor of Durango, Enrique Dupré Ceniceros, to ask him for medical services, to help end the misery suffered by more than 150 families, and jobs for the peasants of Tuitán. The governor was very uspet. He stated he would never receive the group of women again and hurried to ask the Secretaries of Public Education (SEP) and Government to pacify both teachers. The SEP immediately complied with the governor's request: they withheld the two teacher's salaries. The Governor, using six of his agents, kidnapped Lucio (which points out that Lucio didn't begin the kidnappings, he had been kidnapped first). It is not known how, but Lucio managed to escape, return to Atoyac and continued to agitate.

The massacre of Atoyac on May 18th, 1967 was what pushed Lucio Cabañas to become a guerrilla.

It all began with a school conflict. It appears that numerous parents and some of the teachers were asking for the removal of Julia Paco Piza, the principal at Juan Alvarez School. They accused her of being despotic and reactionary. They also asked for the rehiring of Lucio Cabañas, who had been arbitrarily fired from the Modesta Alarcón School. A strike was declared in Juan Alvarez School, in order to solve both problems. After several days, following the mediation of the State's Director of Education, and even the governor, the strike was called off, the director fired, and Lucio

Cabañas rehired. By May 15th, the agreement fell apart: the government failed to carry out its part. So, the struggle was taken up again. On May 18th, a meeting was held. As the first speaker began, the Police opened fire – killing 7 persons and wounding 20. However, things didn't go so well for the police: two of them died and they were forced to flee. The army occupied the city to try and pacify the people, who were outraged at the police. Armed peasants were already mobilized in search of the aggressors.

Leonardo García wrote in the newspaper ***Revolución*** of Acapulco how the Atoyac massacre started:

> I was arranging the microphones for the meeting with the Police Chief and Army Captain, Enrique Castro Arellano said to me, "What are you doing?" I answered, "arranging microphones for the meeting". To which he answered, enraged, "Well, I have direct orders from the governor to stop any riot." People were gathering together and there were already about 2,500 when a traffic cop appeared, blew a whistle and said "Fire" and the firing began – the results of which we all know. (Declaration reproduced in ***La Voz de México***, May 28, 1967).

These women are part of the COCEI (Coalition of Workers, Campesinos, and Students of the Isthmus), a large mass organization that is part of the independent left in Mexico.

The massacre was viewed as just one more massacre in Guerrero and the newspapers with national influence barely paid any attention to it. The only newspaper which wrote at all about it was *Excélsior.* On May 21st, it reported that 21 were killed and more than 20 wounded. It added: In Atoyac, there is apparent calm, but the climate of tension and discontent is obvious." It also said:

> About 50 soldiers encircled the village, to prevent the entrance of armed peasants, who were coming down from the mountains to join the inhabitants of Atoyac. In the port of Acapulco, in Chilpancingo, and other places throughout the state, indignation and discontent are growing against Governor Raymundo Abarca Alarcón, who is considered directly responsible for the shooting. In the port of Acapulco, all the police agents who participated in the shootings are being held. Seven of them are wounded and all of them will be brought to trial. In spite of everything, Lucio Cabañas was held responsible for the massacre. On the day of the massacre, he fled to the mountains, although he was injured.

With the flight of Lucio Cabañas, the first guerrilla movement in the last 10 years was born in Guerrero. It was organized one year before the group led by Genaro Vázquez. How many similarities there are in both of their histories! It is almost as if history had repeated itself! They both began in the same state, although in different places, to organize democratic struggles, principally among the peasants. They were able to lead mass movements that were powerful to a certain degree. At that time, no intention to begin preparation for an armed movement appeared in any of their writings, programs, or speeches. They both underwent brutal repression; attempts were made to remove both of them from political struggle through a massacre – and they both were held responsible for a riot. They became outlaws. The same practice was followed in both cases and similar practice led to the same result: the formation of guerrilla groups.

In a second, Lucio Cabañas was thrown into unknown terrain: armed action. He didn't have time to prepare for it; he had to improvise along the way. All his past practice had taken place within a very militant, but peaceful, public movement. In the case of Lucio Cabañas, no one convinced him to change his form of struggle: rather, he was forced to change it in the heat of battle. This is the typical case of a leader left with no other alternative. It is not a theoretical question, but a practical one. After the massacre at Atoyac, could he continue to work by peaceful means?

In any case, they would try to kill him, to attack his movement, to accuse him of sedition.

Like Genaro Vázquez's group, Lucio Cabañas' group was born with organic ties to the popular movement, and it emerged with a certain mass base. Many of the Mexican guerrilla movements lacked this characteristic, hence their precariousness and isolation.

KIDNAPPINGS, ATTACKS AND AMBUSHES

In a communique which appeared in the magazine *Oposición* (No. 7, 1-15, July, 1970), The Party of the Poor summed up their major actions which occurred between 1967 and the beginning of 1970, but fundamentally during 1969:

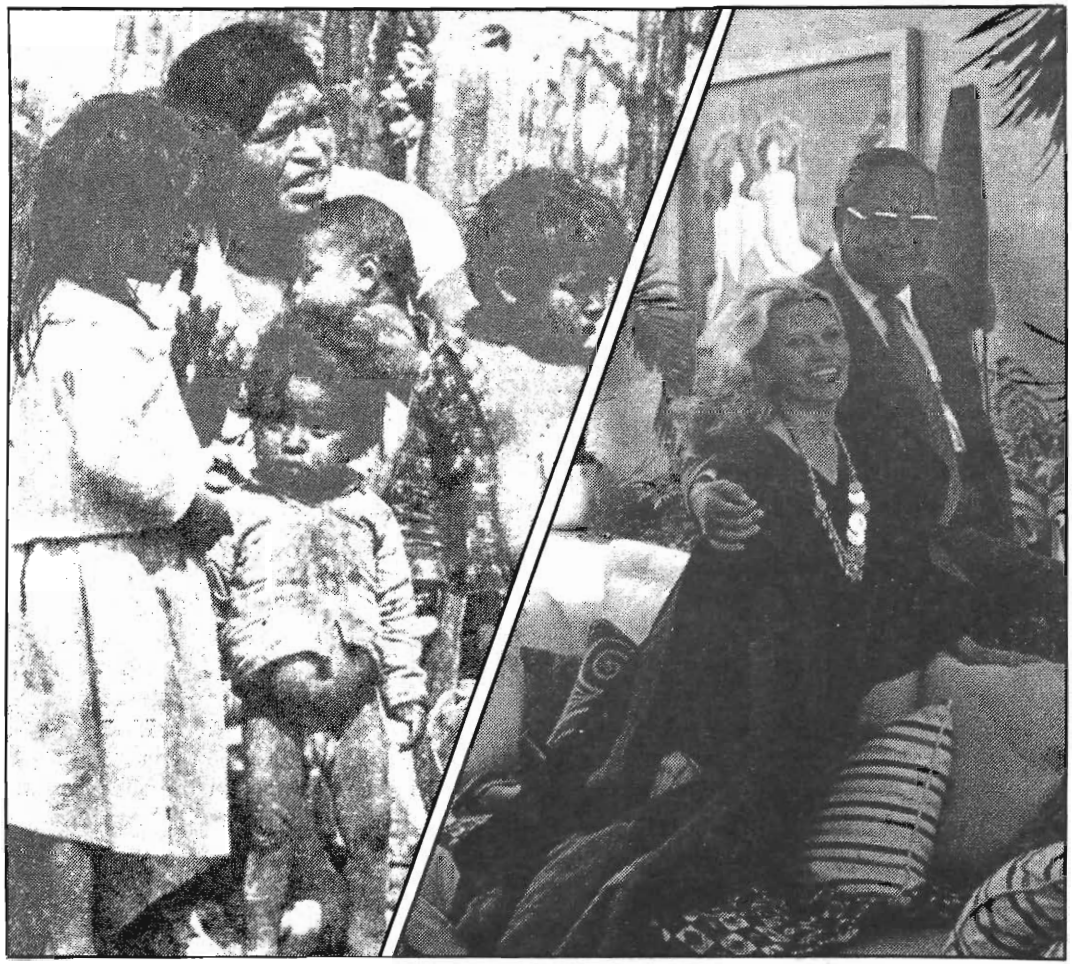
> We shot two sergeants, two leaders whose hired gunmen killed peasants; we attacked the police in response to crimes they committed; under the gun, we forced a rich man to pay the salaries of his 15 servants who he didn't want to pay; we obstructed the political tour of Luis Echeverria, candidate of the millionaires, and prevented him from visiting 6 out of 7 municipalities which make up the Costa Grande; he only got to Cayuca de Benitez accompanied by several assassins led by the ex-governor Rául Caballero Aburto, the author of the massacre of Chilpancingo who was overthrown by the people.

Later, during 1971, 1972, 1973, the Party of the Poor participated in bank holdups, kidnappings and two ambushes of the Army. Among the bank holdups, they are credited with robbing the Downtown Bank of Aguas Calientes on March 2, 1971

Parents search for missing children in a Mexico City morgue following the Mexican government's massacre of 1000 students in Tlateloco Plaza on October 2, 1968.

(booty: 400,000 pesos) and with the robbery carried out on April 16, 1972 in Empalme, Sonora, against a branch of the Banco de Comercio. In a document published in the magazine *Por Qúe?*(February 8, 1973) the Peasants' Brigade for Justice of the Party of the Poor stated:

> On the 22nd of December 1972, two commando groups from the Party of the Poor carried out two armed expropriations against the exploitative, oppressive and bloody capital concentrated and controlled by the bourgeoisie.
> The first action was carried out in Coyuca de Benitez, Guerrero, at 1:00 a.m. in the office of the Viking Construction Company, expropriating 42,325.35 pesos.



The Mexican ruling class lives in opulence while the masses of workers and campesinos live in great poverty.

The second expropriation was carried out in Acapulco, Guerrero, at 9:15 in the morning against the Banco Mexicano del Sur, netting 230,000.00 pesos.

This same grouping also participated in the assault on the branch of the Banco Comercial Mexicano located in the Ministry of Public Education. This action took place on April 13, 1973. Eleven people were arrested in relation to this assault. On May 2, Juan Aviles, Ricardo Rodriguez González, Modesto Trujillo Miranda, Amalia Gámiz Garcia and Maria Dolores Gámiz Garcia de Treviño were formally sentenced to prison for criminal association and robbery. Maria Elena Martinez de Trujillo was found guilty of the crime of robbery and Maria Guadalupe Valdez López, Juan Carlos Valdez López, Juan Rubén Treviño Elizando, Rigoberto Trujillo Miranda and Martin Rodolfo Valdez López were found guilty of the crime of coverup. Arrest warrants were issued against Jacobo Gámiz Garcia, José Luis Orbe Ramirez and another person named Jorge, who were named by the police as participants in the assault. The first escaped with the booty of two million pesos.

KIDNAPPINGS

The engineer Jaime Farril Novelo, director of the Preparatory School Number 2 of Acapulco, was kidnapped on January 7, 1972. On January 13, the Army and the police rescued him from the place where he was being held captive, 20 kilometers from Acapulco. Six men and two women were arrested: Candido Fierro, the engineer Guillermo Bello López, Francisco Fierro Loza, Ocatavio Santiago Dionisio, Rubén Ramirez, José Albarrán, Flora Albarrón and Maria Ascensión Hernandez (see J.M. de Mora, ***Las Guerrillas en Mexico***, pp. 309-320). On pages 312-313 of this same book, the statements of Santiago Dionisio are reproduced. He was the leader of the group which kidnapped the engineer Farril Novelo. He said that they kidnapped him because he is "a man who is linked to foreign factories. He is right-wing and very good friends with the president of the Autonomous University of Guerrero, Doctor Jaime Castrejón Garcia." He added that the groups of Genaro Vázquez and Lucio Cabañas (when he made this statement, Vázquez was not yet dead) were two different organizations who struggled for the same ideals. "He then stated that Lucio Cabañas' organization is made up of about 35 men who are divided into commandos and who operate in different sectors. They use a place in the Atoyac mountains as a general headquarters, the location of which he did not specify." They were not sure whether Farril had the three million pesos that they demanded for his release, but "we knew that his family could get it from their friends." Finally, he stated that "the money was going to be given to Lucio Cabañas to distribute among the poor in the mountains and to get arms to continue the struggle."

On March 7, 1973, Francisco Sanchez López was kidnapped:

> The Justice Brigade of the Party of the Poor takes responsibility for the kidnapping of Francisco Sánchez López, member of the exploitative Mexican bourgeoisie, owner of dairies, farm land, cocoa fields, monopoly controller

of coconut products in the state of Guerrero and associate owner of the oil and soap factory "La Polar;" he lends money at high interest rates, rates so high that he acquires the peasants' land solely because they can not pay the interest on the debts by a certain date. He pays his workers miserable salaries; he buys the coconut and other agricultural products at low prices. So, these rich people are concerned only with increasing their fortunes and with their pleasures, while the workers lead lives of suffering. (*Por Qúe*?,May 3, 1973)

Excélsior reported on April 19, 1973, that "one month and ten days after the kidnappping, the corpse of millionaire cattleman Francisco Sánchez López was found in the mountains of Atoyac de Alvarez." The Party of the Poor had asked for 2.5 million pesos ransom; since this amount was not paid, the cattleman was killed.

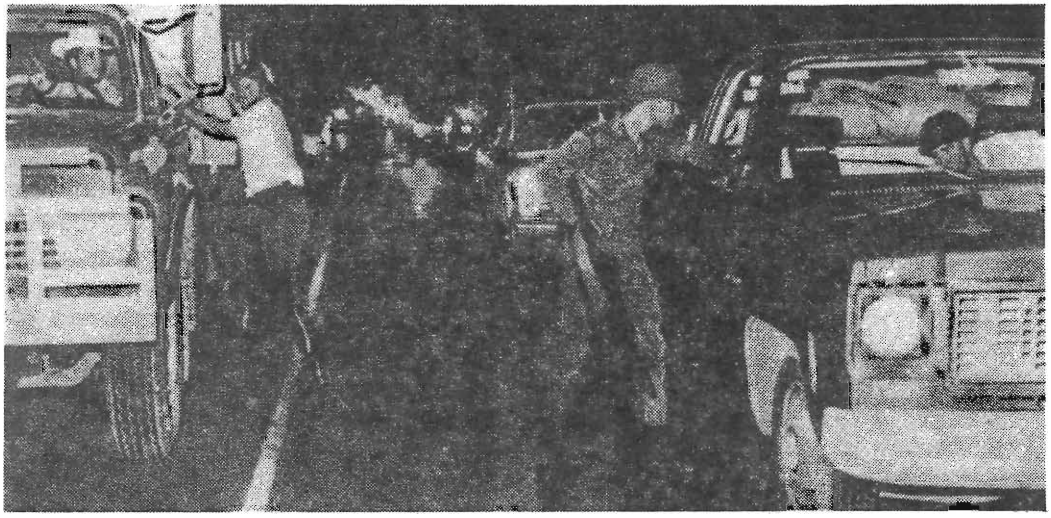
AMBUSHES

Of all the actions, the most spectacular were two ambushes of the Army. The first was carried out on June 25, 1972. In a communique published in *Por Qúe?* on August 17, 1972, the Party of the Poor says:

> On Sunday, June 25 of this year, at 9:30 a.m., in a place called Arroyo de las Piñas, between the villages of San Andrés de la Cruz and Santiago de la Unión, we attacked and wiped out a Federal Army unit of the Fifth Infantry Batallion, whose command is centered in Atoyac de Alvarez, Guerrero. They were transporting a military vehicle on the Atoyac-El Paraíso highways towards the neighborhood of San Vicente de Benítez, where they were posted. A lieutenant, two sergeants and seven soldiers were killed. We also captured two soldiers with light injuries, but they were released immediately following the attack. We took all the unit's clothing and papers: documents, arms, ammunition and campaign equipment which we have copies and pictures of. We also got six automatic weapons: 4 FAL rifles of 7.62 caliber, with 16 20-cartridge clips and 290 good cartridges, a 30 M-2 carbine with 3 15-cartridge clips and 45 cartridges, a 45 pistol, a clip and 4 cartridges. All the arms are foreign made. . .

The same communique also stated that the Army had carried out 12 manhunt campaigns in the mountains against the armed groups since 1967. "The manhunts have been characterized by the high number of murders, disappeared persons, innocent prisoners, kidnappings and torture, burning of houses and helicopters dropping bombs on peasants." The names of the dead, arrested and disappeared were listed, coming to a total of 44.

On June 27, *Excélsior* wrote that "military and civilian forces are searching the mountains for the perpetrators of the massacre of soldiers." At that time, General Hermenegildo Cuenca Díaz, Secretary of National Defense, was in Acapulco. When asked if his presence could be attributed to the June 25 ambush, the General replied that this was pure coincidence — he happened to be making a series of regular



Mexican army checks cars searching for guerrillas.

visits to different military zones. (What a coincidence!) The same newspaper wrote on June 28, " by air and land, more than 500 men are tracking the bandits who murdered 10 soldiers and wounded 2 more in an ambush last Sunday."

On June 28, ***Avance of Acapulco*** confirmed that:

> Many convoys are moving from Acapulco towards Costa Grande; new units of heavy military vehicles are going through the center of the city, and at Mosimba, the exit to Costa Grande. Yesterday there was frequent movement of military trucks with heavily armed soldiers.

On June 28, 1972, the newspaper ***Trópico*** of Acapulco said that it was "the greatest display of military force carried out to this point in the mountains of Atoyac. . ."

On August 23, 1972 the second ambush was carried out. This is how the Secretary of National Defense announced it in ***Excélsior*** on August 24th:

> At approximately 2:00 today, August 23, 1972, an encounter took place between members of the military of the 50th Infantry Batallion and a group of crooks, above the Santiago River on the road leading from Atoyac de Alvarez to San Vicente de Benítez, Guerrero.
>
> The military personnel were traveling to the village of San Vicente, transporting a truck of food supplies for the section of the 50th Batallion posted in this village. A leader, an officer and 5 soldiers died and several soldiers were wounded. We still don't know how many bandits were killed or wounded. They fled and were chased by members of the 50th Infantry Batallion.
>
> The Secretary of National Defense, Division General Hermenegildo Cuenca Días left that very day for Atoyac de Alvarez to personally direct the measures aimed at restoring the situation to normality in the region.

This time it was not pure chance that the General was in Guerrero, as had been stated during the first ambush.

In a communique published by *Por Que?* (September 14, 1972) the Justice Brigade announced the ambush:

> In this first we killed 18 soldiers, and took 20 prisoners, including 9 wounded, whom we released after we explained to them the ideas of the Revolution of the Poor. We took 40 arms from them; we also obtained packs, watches, blankets, medicine, food and enough ammunition for all the captured weapons. (They also stated that they had suffered no casualties.)

Another round of persecution began. On August 24, the newspaper *El Diá* wrote:

> Unofficially, we learned that the 27th Batallion of Acapulco, the 48th of Cruz Grande, the 50th of Atoyac, the 32nd of Chilpancingo and the 19th of Cuernavaca are all engaged in the pursuit of Lucio Cabañas' group.

Mass arrests also began. On September 9th, *Excelsior* confirmed: "With the 45 people arrested yesterday, this brings to 69 the accused members of Lucio Cabañas' group currently held prisoner in the 27th Military Zone." They were suspected of having carried out the August 23rd ambush.

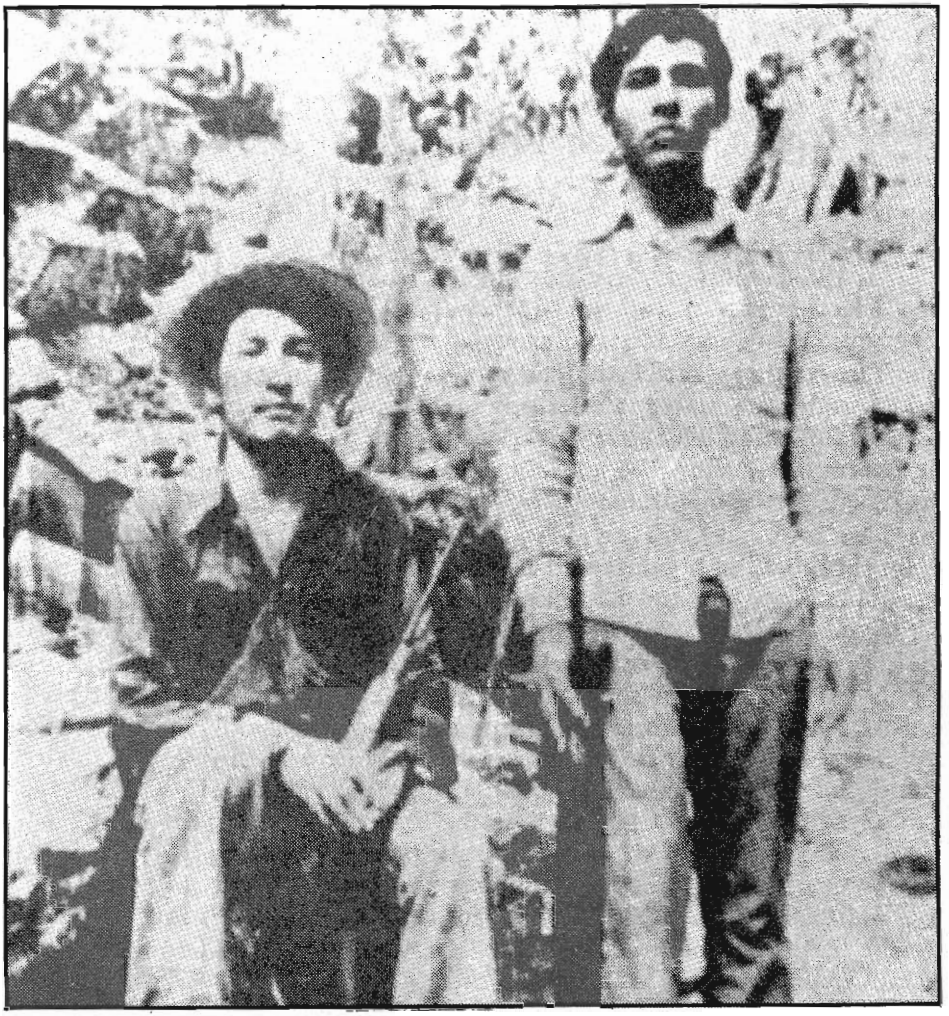
On September 13th, the same newspaper reported that 17 of the accused had been turned over to agents of the Federal Ministry of the Public, charged with homicide, assault, theft, damage to property, and criminal association against military authorities:

> One of the people arrested, Evaristo Castañón Flores, declared before the military Minister of the Public that he accepted the charge of having fired the fatal shot which killed the Major (Bardomiano Morales de la Vega) who led the troops.
>
> When they were taken before the lawyer Antonio Uribe Garcĭa, who was the district judge, they denied having participated in the attack and said that their signatures on military documents were obtained by torture.
>
> The 17 accused people were imprisoned in the Acapulco jail, which was under Army control, since there were over 100 other persons who had been arrested (in the last few months) and charged with participating in the two attacks against the military.

On February 9, 1973, *Excélsior* reported that "the Lawyer Antonio Uribe, District Judge (of Acapulco), released 29 of the 90 peasants accused of participating in the murder of several soldiers in the mountains of Atoyac." Judge Uribe released them "after proving that the 29 peasants were innocent, even though they had signed a confession before military authorities and the Federal Ministry of the Public, taking responsibility for the massacre of the soldiers which took place in September."

The fact is that "the peasants...had been tortured to extract a confession."

On two occasions, the Secretary of Defense, Hermenegildo Cuenca Dĭaz, offered Lucio Cabañas amnesty. The first time was on March 17, 1972 and the second time



Lucio Cabañas (seated) with compañero.

on November 18, 1972. Lucio Cabañas never responded--at least not directly. Referring to these offers, Octavio Santiago Dionisio, a member of the Party of the Poor who was arrested in Acapulco and accused of participating in the kidnapping of the Engineer Farril, said, in an interview published in ***Excélsior*** (March 22, 1973), that:

> Lucio Cabañas will never ask for a pardon, nor will he accept it if it is offered to him--although this could cause his death...Lucio went to the mountains convinced that he would never come back down and make peace with the killers of peasants. If he asked for a pardon this would, to a certain degree, betray the struggle he had led to this point.

When it was learned that Francisco Sánchez Lopez had been killed by his kidnappers (members of the Party of the Poor) because his ransom had not been paid, the Governor of Guerrero, Israel Nogueda Otero said furiously--according to the April 21, 1973 edition of *Excélsior*--"There will be no amnesty for Lucio Cabañas."

COMMENTARY

Like Genaro Vásquez' movement, this movement, based in the masses, did not develop on its own, merely as a nucleus. Rather, it was linked to a popular action which began around 1964. Lucio Cabañas began his political development as a member of the Communist Party of Mexico. In Atoyac he helped to organize the People's Electoral Front and the Independent Peasant Headquarters. Cabañas was the most important organizer and agitator produced by the guerrilla movement. No one has been able to achieve the enormous challenge involved in moving, under any conditions and in all places, a relatively large mass movement. Over 3,000 peasants attended the meeting which was attacked by the police in Atoyac. This number of people continually followed Lucio Cabañas' leadership: in mobilizations to expose local problems, to demand democracy, to expose agricultural problems, etc. These actions never stopped, which is why Cabañas was exiled to a tiny village in Durango where he continued to organize and agitate the masses. This brought about reprisals. He returned to Atoyac, and he did not lose his leadership or his organizational and agitational capacity. On the terrain of peaceful struggle, he waged a good battle. In order to wipe him out--as with Genaro Vazquez–brute force was used against him, forcing him first to improvise and later to organize guerrilla warfare. He built a large group that was tied, to a certain point, to the peasant movement in the State of Guerrero–and to the student movement in the State and throughout the Republic: Sonora, Tamaulipas, Aguascalientes, Guanajuato and Mexico City. Ties with these mass movements allowed the Party of the Poor to be the only guerrilla movement able to maintain itself for six years. Of all those movements which have existed in the last ten years, this is the only one to survive.

In a political environment like Mexico, this is a true feat. And it is a double feat because he had been able to sustain the struggle both as a leader of an unarmed and armed movement.

He has carried out the struggle in all fields and has maintained it in all. It has not grown to the degree that it represents or has represented a serious threat for the governor or the system we live under. It is an active force – perhaps the most or one of the most important within the Mexican left. How was this achieved? One answer is the personal ability of Lucio Cabañas. It is perhaps the only one, since the program, calls, even certain actions, are not of great relevance: this can be ascertained from reading its program and declarations. Everything is the work of a leader. In spite of this, other guerrillas also begin to distinguish themselves: for example, the two students who escaped from Chilpancingo jail (Carmelo Cortés and Carlos Ceballos), allow us to hope that perhaps The Party of the Poor will not die out if Lucio Cabañas dies. This happened with ACNR when Genaro Vázquez's death left it lifeless.

The Party of the Poor suffers the same weakness of all Mexican guerrilla organizations: it has become trapped in bank hold-ups and kidnappings. This, of course, has not been disastrous for the Party of the Poor – perhaps it never will be. However, it poses the danger of becoming an armed movement which repeats the same type of actions over and over again, without progressing and advancing. This would mean the repetition of what the Mexican left has 20, 30, 40, or more years of practice in doing: vegetation, repetition, and stagnation. It is not destroyed, it just continues; it leads an obscure life of inertia. How many left organizations have spent years and years doing the same thing they have done since they began, repeating the same slogans, phrases, publishing the same documents, applying the same tactics, covering the same path over and over again? Well, it is this obstacle which threatens The Party of the Poor.

Throughout Mexico, peasants are confronting the PRI government and rich landowners. Many campesinos are now united under the banner of the "National Coordinator of the Plan of Ayala" which takes its name from the program of Emiliano Zapata.

NOTHING IS FREE IN HISTORY

Analysis of the Guerrilla Struggle of Arturo Gamiz in the State of Chihuahua by a political collective in Chihuahua, Mexico

On September 23, 1965 the guerrilla group led by teacher's college professor Arturo Gamiz Garcia attacked the headquarters of the Mexican army located in Ciudad Madera in the state of Chihuahua. The garrison suffered 16 casualities. Eight of the 13 participants in the attack lost their lives, the majority of them killed off without warning after being wounded and taken prisoner. The fact that one of every five participants survived the battle gives a clear idea of the fierce bloodiness of this military confrontation. The armed people mounted an offensive against the repressive power of the Mexican state for the first time.

The unequal numbers of the combat forces, the differences in military equipment and experience determined the result of that combat: armed with skeet shotguns, molotov cocktails they didn't know how to use, and .22 calibre rifles, the people's combatants were defeated militarily. Their corpses were hurled into a common grave and buried under not just tons of soil, but also calumnies and false interpretations of their motives for struggle. Analysts, observers, ideologues, opportunists and also indisputably honest people would have described this little understood passage of Mexican history differently, had the results of this combat been otherwise. The fighters would have been nothing less than "popular heroes", "revolutionary vanguard", etc. Now they are just called the "Martyrs of Madera".

At that moment - 1965 - the struggle of Professor Gamiz and his guerrilla nucleus was characterized in a thousand ways:

1. they were victims of a provocation that led them to suicide; innocent victims of "who knows what obscure forces which deceived them."
2. their movement was nothing more than a regional uproar against local *caciques* (bosses).
3. the cause of the guerrilla struggle was the political incapacity, the imperiousness and stupidity of a governor who, by being allied to the latifundist (land-owning) and cattle-breeding oligarchy of the state, felt no inclination to even disguise his class position. (This thesis points to the supposition that outside Chihuahua the population lived in the lap of luxury. And that the *Porfirista** political chiefs, the state governors, were at least more inclined to give the people some small tokens of agrarian reform.)
4. Inspired by the victorious example of the Cuban Revolution, Gamiz and his group proposed to duplicate the attack on the Moncada Barracks.
5. The attack on the barracks in Cuidad Madera was a desperate and imprudent act which provoked repression against the local residents.

Beyond these ideas, the military disaster that climaxes the guerrilla experiences

*Porfirista refers to the dictatorship which preceded the 1910-1917 revolution.

of these people's combatants also gave rise to the fabrications of the most absurd tales of how impractical it is to develop revolutionary struggle in our country. The opportunists intoned the swan song for armed struggle in Mexico as was done two years later by the opportunists on an international level with the death of Che Guevara in Bolivia.

The year following the failed politico-military undertaking, Cardenas, the "workerist" and "farmerist" president, was commissioned by then-president Diaz Ordaz to act as a fireman in the Madera region. During the tour he made through the region, he became aware of the agricultural needs of the people and the lack of political liberties. This proved that the armed struggle that the people unleashed was justifiable, due to the enormous contradictions in Chihuahua's farming system. In the recommendations he sent to Diaz Ordaz, he pointed out the need for agrarian reform, the suspension of military supervision, the transfer of military figures known for their repressive role and the modification of the repressive image of the army and their conversion into humble sisters of charity.

Nevertheless, the land was not immediately redistributed. The politics of the regime with respect to agrarian reform (as with respect to anything which implies real concessions to the people when living conditions become unbearable) consists in conceding absolutely nothing under popular pressure. Everything that the regime grants, it does using the mask of paternalism, and always and only when it doesn't substantially reduce the profit margin of the capitalists.

In the case of the latifundists in Chihuahua, the land wasn't given to the peasants until many years later, when the firm "Forests of Chihuahua" had already stripped the hillsides through wasteful cutting and when popular pressure had been reduced as a result of the defeat of the best sons of the people who had armed themselves. In 1971, Echeverria proceeded to redistribute 250,000 hectares of the barren hills, in a clear political maneuver that was designed to demonstrate that this had nothing to do with the military events of six years earlier.

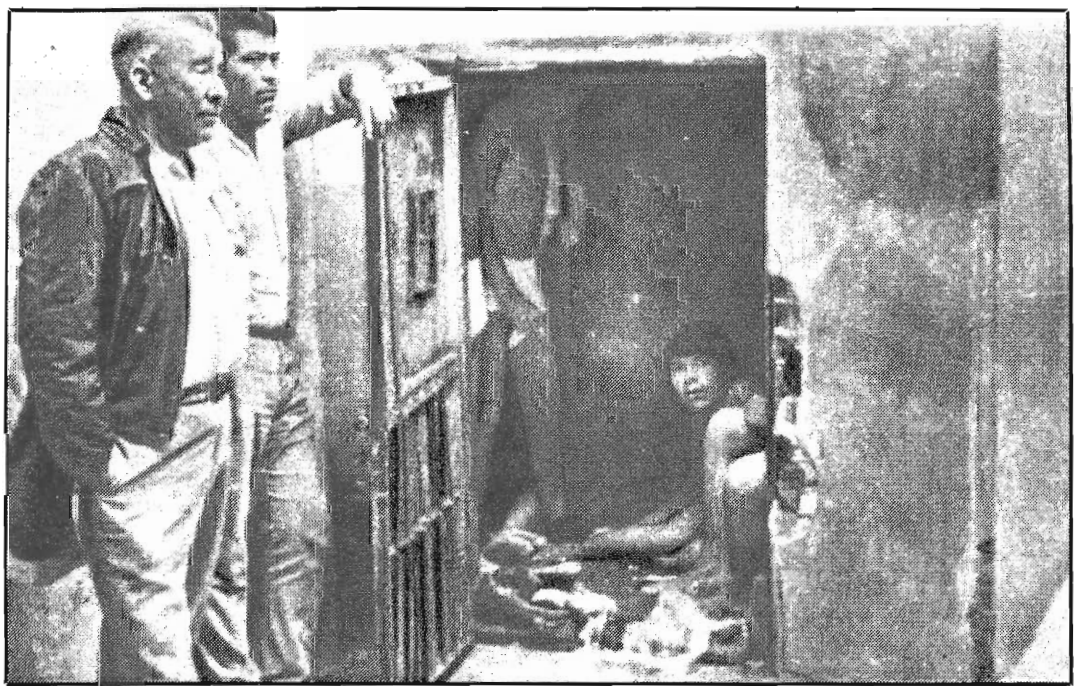
After 15 years, that valiant military experience of the people, carried out by its best sons in arms, scarcely remains. To a new generation, it is reduced to the vague recollection of a romantic group who had the illusion of destroying the repressive power of the State armed only with skeet shotguns and .22s. To politically understand the true motivation of the armed revolutionaries who attacked the Madera headquarters, we must return to the genesis and development of that guerrilla nucleus, and study the political conceptions that sustained its revolutionary activity.

Much was written of the attack on the Madera headquarters at the time and even some years after. Later came silence. And what is most characteristic of that abundant literature is that none of it judged the group based on a Marxist criteria. That is to say, no class analysis was made from the point of view of the working class. Everything remained reduced to texts made basically on journalistic notes, on anecdotes, and on biographical notes – magnificent as they are – about the participants in the attack. Nor has there been an analysis or diffusion of the political concep-

tions which they upheld, which were so important to them that they gave their lives for the revolution.

It is not strange that the regime has been silent. Nothing frightens the bourgeoisie so much as the spread of revolutionary truth. But why the left? They were neither the suicides, nor adventurists, irresponsibles nor desperados, they came to be characterized by the Mexican left of that epoch. At best, the left agreed to call them "mistaken" with a silent warning to all who would want to follow their example, that could be translated into something like "You see what happened to the desperados!" Despite their youth, they had accumulated vast political experience at the side of the peasant masses, leading various revolutionary actions of the masses in the midst of the most ferocious repression.

For more than a year the guerrilla group maintained itself in the mountains, inflicting defeats and blows against the army as well as the bosses and their "white guards". During this time, they dedicated themselves to carrying out political work among the inhabitants of the region, being at the same time in constant contact with the radicalized student masses at the rural and urban normal schools in the state. At the same time they carried out a tremendous ideological task in the heart of their own group, and assimilated the military experience, and acquired weapons to develop the revolutionary war.



These "tiger cages" are part of a network of clandestine jails in which the PRI "disappears" and tortures political prisoners.

To say that only the government of the state of Chihuahua used the garrote to keep popular demands within bounds would be to deny the history and the essentially repressive nature of the Mexican State, which in the final years of the 50's and the beginning of the 60's had launched a fierce witch-hunt against the whole independent popular movement. After striking at the working class (railroad workers, teachers, telegraphers) the regime dedicated itself to repressing the peasants and assassinated Ruben Jaramillo*. Guerrero was held in a constant state of siege, and the deaths were counted by the scores; despite this, the people succeeded in toppling the governor of that state. For example, during the visits of Kennedy and DeGaulle the whole left was put under protective guard so as not to scare off possible investments.

Today - 1981 - the repressive character of the bourgeois state has not changed. The frank, open repression of the last decade has been transformed into sophisticated and silent repression, with the endorsement of those who were imprisoned yesterday for Kennedy's visit and who today, thanks to the 'Political Reform'* greet Carter in the Chamber of Deputies. In reality, there are no political prisoners in our country -- only murdered and disappeared. Repression reaches every union, every peasant community, and every sector that wants to act politically independently of the state; it is a prerequisite to the increase of profits for the bourgeoisie and imperialism. The blows which the "white brigade" inflicts today are silent, as are all the political attitudes of the bourgeoisie which obscure the necessary truth of the revolutionary history of the Mexican people with reactionary lies.

It is undeniable that the attack on the Madera headquarters was inspired by the Cuban Revolution. This revolution has had such influence on the people of Latin America that a whole generation of revolutionary youth rose up in our country, as in the whole continent with Turcios Lima*, Camilo Torres*, Miguel Enriquez * and

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* Ruben Jaramillo was a peasant leader who led many land takeovers in Mexico. He was assassinated by the Mexican government.

* Political Reform is a policy instituted by the P.R.I. government in 1979. The Reform allowed for previously excluded parties e.g. the Communist Party and the Socialist Workers Party to participate in the elections. The P.R.I. implemented this reform in order to draw the reformist left into the electoral struggle and to try and isolate the revolutionary, non-electoral left.

* Turcios Lima was a Guatemalan revolutionary.

* Camilo Torres was a revolutionary priest from Colombia. He rejected the traditional Catholic preachings of pacifism and the belief that it was the duty of the poor to suffer on earth. Instead he dedicated his life to fighting, arms in hand, to achieving justice for the people.

* Miguel Enriquez was the founder of the Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria (M.I.R.) in Chile which broke with the reformist and pacifist politics of the Communist Party of Chile.

Carlos Fonseca*. They broke with the traditional schemes of class struggle and with the catastrophic, impotent conceptions which denied the possibility of revolution in our homeland because of its proximity to the U.S.A. A young generation that hasn't achieved the construction of an organized historical strategy, a young generation who, although unknown to each other, can identify its members by the unity of their political thought, by the similarity of conceptions, and by the force of their ideas.

To realize the degree of influence of the Cuban Revolution on that generation, nothing is more appropriate than the very words of Professor Arturo Gamiz:

> One of the causes of Mexico's revolution for Independence was the influence of the French revolution. Since then, nothing has influenced the people of America as much as the Cuban revolution. Nothing has lodged in the consciousness of the people like the Cuban revolution, nothing has stimulated us as much as the Cuban revolution. No single act has destroyed as many myths and fallacies as the Cuban revolution and nothing has brought to the oppressed people of America hope and confidence in the future and certainty of triumph as much as the Cuban revolution.

Whoever expects to find in the above paragraph a "proof" that the attackers of Madera headquarters lived outside reality, proposing to make mechanical copies to apply in our country, doesn't understand the international character of class struggle in the era of imperialism and also fails to understand Arturo Gamiz' revolutionary thought and analysis of the national situation.

Some people think, perhaps, that one Moncada, with its enormous toll of deaths, is sufficient in the history of the Latin American revolution. Perhaps some think that its principal error was its prematurity, since they achieved several victorious confrontations against the repressive forces, and the people and the mountains protected the fighters at a time when they still lacked sufficient strength for an undertaking of such magnitude. Perhaps. But nothing authorizes those who have never made a revolution to judge those who, conscious that "the blood spilled to free the people is spilled today with sterility" dared to comply with their revolutionary duty, conscious also that "one must have a bourgeois hierarchy of values to put one's own life above everything else."

A military error does not discredit the revolutionaries who commit it, since in war, battles are won and lost. In this case, what is sad for the proletarian revolution in Mexico, is that brave and visionary people's combatants should have succumbed in one of their first politico-military combats, before having developed the necessary conditions as an organized nucleus. This is the risk of all beginnings, when the people commence to fight with sticks and stones and. . . skeet shotguns.

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* Carlos Fonseca was one of the founders of the Frente Sandinista de Liberacion Nacional (F.S.L.N.) in Nicaragua. Later killed in combat. One of the major proponents of the strategy of protracted people's war.

What was the military error of Arturo Gamiz in attacking the Madera headquarters? The answer is found in the campaign diary of guerrilla Oscar Gonzales Eguiarte, who at the moment of the attack was part of the urban team of political and logistical support for the rural guerrillas, and who years later formed a guerrilla group in the same zone of the Sierra of Chihuahua:

> The errors in the march towards the objective were the following: the group charged with the bringing of weapons to the determined place failed to be punctual, thereby forcing the group which included compañero Gamiz to continue the advance without sufficient weapons. A second group joined comrade Gamiz and sent one individual to the group which had fallen behind, to try to get information. They answered that it was not going to be possible to arrive on the agreed day, due to having gone astray, but the compañero who was sent also failed in this assignment. They planned the tactical combat and strategic retreat. The first minutes of the battle favored the guerrillas. The tactical error that cost the lives of our eight comrades was the delay in ordering the retreat. The retreat came when the enemy had the guerrillas practically surrounded. Since what comrade Gamiz did not know, for lack of an intelligence network, was that the enemy had reinforcements of soldiers interned in the

Cuban revolutionaries after capturing the government outpost at Fomento.

town. They came to the rescue of the embattled headquarters and surrounded the guerrillas. Or it may be that they were acting on the advice of a traitor, who had been identified, but who by his capacity to elude responsibility, and because of the weakness of the revolutionary movement, continued to live. This is a reference to retired Army captain Lorenzo Cardenas Barajas, who has been denounced several times as a traitor even by the parents of Arturo, Jacobo and Emilio Gamiz. Our eight losses were registered when the retreat was attempted, and the other five comrades (one of them wounded and protected in retreat by another compañero), were able to elude the encirclement and take refuge in the mountains.

And if Gamiz was conscious, as the leader, of the limited possibility of a victorious attack because of insufficient and inadequate weapons and by the lack of a military support group to compensate for the numerical disadvantage caused by the reduction of his group, the question necessarily arises "Why did he decide to carry out the attack? " Above all, his decision obeyed the needs of political mobilization. At that time there was a farce of agrarian reform in the works, headed by Lazaro Cardenas, seconded by the right wing of the UGOCM (General Union of Mexican Peasants and Workers) affiliated with the Popular Socialist Party to which Gamiz had belonged a long time before. The regime's maneuver was clear: It was not able to redistribute land in the accustomed manner, that is, by the grace of "Señor President" nor to utilize the *charro* (sell-out) organizations like the CNC (National Peasant Confederation) because that would have signified that the government was conceding in the face of popular pressure exemplified by a guerrilla front that, little by little, was rooting itself among the popular masses. The political decision of Arturo Gamiz was to clip the wings of the dirty maneuver which was coming from the "left" designed to take away popular support for the guerrilla struggle in order to transfer it to those then called the "moderate" left. **Their plan was not to seize the headquarters,** but only to carry out a lightning attack with propagandistic political ends, rapidly and then immediately proceed to a retreat. The military error which provoked the political disaster was in delaying the order to retreat.

Those who criticize the Madera headquarters attackers take one of two positions, justifying along the way their own revolutionary inactivity. Some assume the regionalism of the guerrilla front in Chihuahua, and others accuse the revolutionaries of not knowing the concrete conditions of national reality and of trying to repeat the exploits of the Cuban revolution in our country. However, the actual political conceptions and revolutionary activity which led to the military activity of Professor Gamiz disprove these criticisms.

In October, 1963 and February, 1965, under the leadership of the social activists who participated in the attack on the Madera headquarters, two political encounters were held in the mountains of Chihuahua in which delegations of students and peasants and a minority of workers from various regions of the country participated. They studied and analyzed the conditions of national life in the light of Marxism.

An outcome of those encounters in the mountains is political analyses which amply set forth these revolutionaries' understandings of Mexican history, the present national reality and the international situation. Those documents clearly register the political vision of the future. That future is now the present. Many of their political conclusions are fulfilled, and the near future will permit us to affirm that the revolutionaries of Madera were not "mistaken," as the left would like to make them out to have been.

Constant participation in the peasant struggles for land, the exhausting work of going through agrarian tribunals and waiting rooms for years, the permanent repression and surveillance to which they were subjected, the necessarily theoretical study of the national reality in the context of the international scene of struggle of the working class and oppressed peoples against imperialism, the influence of the Cuban revolution; these were the political bases that the attackers of the Madera headquarters had. They conceived of Chihuahua only as the appropriate place to initiate hostilities against the bourgeoisie and imperialism, because of the understanding they had of its terrain and because of its propitious political conditions for undertaking the road of armed struggle in our country. Chihuahua was not the goal of the revolutionaries of Madera, it was only the beginning. This was not regionalism.

For those of us in Mexico who want to make revolution, fulfilling the responsibility of our generation, it is imperative to understand the political work of the attackers of Madera headquarters. This becomes more important at this moment when political confusion has been provoked by forces of the left who have shamelessly supported state proposals and abandoned all of their projects – if they actually had any – of working class independence. They are deviating the masses from their historical mission. It becomes necessary to take up the study of Gamiz' political work now, when the conceptions of political violence in our country have been reduced to a simple negation of the scientific theory of revolution by those who have confused revolutionary political activity with simply firing bullets or killing a railroad agent to obtain a revolver, etc. They do not understand – and in fact deny – the fundamental political conceptions concerning national liberation in our country that were sustained by Professor Gamiz.

Not lunatics, not suicides, not martyrs. Martyrs are the Christians who immolated themselves in the Roman Circus; suicides are the Japanese kamikaze pilots; lunatics, Hitler and Mussolini. The revolutionary is not a suicide or a lover of death. The revolutionary aspires to live in order to transform the miserable living conditions of his or her people, and if to succeed it is necessary to give up this existence, she or he gives it willingly that the people might continue living.

The Mexican people, in their struggle for bread and land, for international solidarity and freedom, for the defense of political liberty, have been generous in the sacrifice of martyrs on the altar of capitalism. Jaramillo and his family were assassinated, Roman Guerra Montemayor was assassinated, hundreds of workers and peasants have been repressed by the Mexican state. In all these struggles, the people always

Graficas Guasabara / FIREWORKS

were disarmed, just as the class enemy was always armed, and therefore on the offensive.

Until September 23, 1965, the offensive was always on the side of the oppressors; the people always acted on the defensive, offering their chests to the bayonets. But from that date the Mexican state knew that the people were no longer disposed to serve as targets for free fire by the soldiers. New guerrilla experiences rose up later all across the country: Genaro Vasquez and the ACNR (Revolutionary National Civic Association), Lucio Cabañas and the Partido de los Pobres (Party of the Poor), various and ephemeral organizations that were born in the heat of the repression launched by the regime against the students in 1968 and June 10, 1971. This culminated with the appearance, existence and decline of the adventurist September 23 Communist League* – adventurist, with all due respect to those who honestly participated in it, those who fell and those who survived – who adopted this name in intended homage and continuation of the work of the revolutionaries of Madera. Fallen revolutionaries do not need eulogies to record their memory. Their work and their conceptions give them life. In order to understand the revolutionary tasks of those who, for the first time in the history of the Mexican proletariat, undertook the road of national liberation, employing revolutionary violence, armed above all with the scientific theory of revolution, we have the obligation to study their thought. We must study their conceptions about class struggle in our country, about the relation of the national to the international situation. We must study the pitiless criticism they made of the mouldy organizations of the left, which they prophetically characterized as prone to finding themselves in what we know today as the Political Reform. We must study their organizational propositions and their ideas on the interventionist maneuvers of Yankee imperialism which they could foresee in our country.

The texts that we offer were written by Professor Arturo Gamiz Garcia, leader of the guerrilla movement in Chihuahua, precursor of the revolutionary movement in our country. They were elaborated in October, 1963 and February, 1965, during the "Encounters in the Mountains" and published in the form of "resolutions and statements" by Ediciones Linea Revolucionaria, having a clandestine circulation.

The revival of the revolutionary thought of Professor Gamiz is not just to recount history. The final goal is to contribute ideological material of fundamental importance to the class struggle in our country, that will permit us to step up the revolutionary activity of our people in the task which lies with our generation as this century draws to a close: to build the history of the definitive liberation of our people.

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* The September 23 Communist League was riddled with agents and dissolved after several spectacular bank robberies and other urban guerrilla activity in the early and mid-70s.

Excerpts from the writings of Arturo Gamiz . . .

CONCERNING IMPERIALISM

. . .For all the dependent peoples, the death agony of imperialism, a magnificent occurrence that makes us very happy, involves grave risks. It is a bitter and difficult era, because undoubtedly imperialism will try to save itself at the expense of our peoples. As it sinks deeper into the swamp of its contradictions, it will pull harder on the people it subjugates, will intensify the exploitation. For Mexico, this stage will be particularly hard; being at the feet of the imperial colossus, we will doubtless not escape its claws. Can it be hoped that it will modify its nature before it dies? It is senseless to suppose that it is going to accept disarmament because its power resides in arms. . .

In the face of the heroism and the unbreakable decision by dependent peoples to conquer or die, imperialism has no other recourse but to fall back and to change its tactics. Once the inefficacy of punitive expeditions armed to the teeth is proved, so that every piratical incursion returns battered and abused; and seeing that the occupation of peoples does nothing more than incite and encourage them; imperialism effectuates a tactical retreat to avoid greater setbacks, and carries out camouflage maneuvers to regain control over the people and detain their revolutionary offensive.

. . .The basic methods of neo-colonialism are: control of the economy, control of foreign trade, and unequal exchange.

To control the economy, it is necessary to make investments in certain branches, and above all in key industries, by means of investments with the stamp of the metropole, mixed or by private enterprise, which often is simply a pimp for foreign capital.

To control a country's foreign trade, one must have a certain force within the national economy, to absorb the greater part of the export, and distribute the greater part of the imports of the country in question.

CONCERNING THE HISTORY OF MEXICO

Zapata and Villa are the greatest and most authentic revolutionaries that Mexico has produced; they are the best examples for Mexican youth. To study their lives and their work is an elementary duty of those who consider ourselves revolutionaries. There was a time when the bourgeoisie would have wanted to keep them in the shadows, as it wants to obscure everything that is inconvenient for it, every illuminating example, every instructive experience, every fact that opens the people's eyes and lights the way. Today they have changed their attitude towards Zapata and

". . . Yanki imperialism, sooner or later, will occupy our homeland militarily. But imperialism also can be destroyed; it is being destroyed in other areas, and it will be destroyed in Mexico as well."

Villa. The bourgeoisie and even the Yankees are the first to pronounce florid discourses in their memory, to erect statues of them and to put their names on things. But all those actions are intended to disfigure them, presenting a false image, co-opting their revolutionary achievements, and using them as a shield to protect the government's misdeeds.

. . .Some judge Cardenas without being based in class criteria, praise him disproportionately and attribute to him all the positive characteristics of that period. But there were other factors: the world crisis of imperialism from 1929 to 1933 opened the eyes of the proletariat and put it on guard. At the same time, the Calles administration and that of the managers had exacerbated a series of contradictions and had created a revolutionary situation. All this made possible the Cardenas parenthesis.

THE NATIONAL SITUATION

State capitalism in Mexico signifies the integration or forced fusion of the state machinery with national capital, the use of the State to favor the development of that capital, to represent it and protect it in the face of imperialism and above all against the proletariat, and to seek better prices and more markets for its goods. The state protects the interests of capital in the face of imperialism by means of compromise and reconciliation, and against the proletariat and the popular masses by means of control, mediation and repression of the revolutionary movement.

Gustavo Diaz Ordaz will follow, if he has 100 grams of gray matter, the same demagogic politics as his predecessor Adolfo Lopez Mateo. He will smash without consideration any sign of life in the workers', peasants' or student movements, and without any shame, he will ask for . . and will receive, the support of the left by merely making two or three declarations in favor of world peace, non-intervention, self-determination and de-nuclearization of America, and with two or three votes that signify nothing against North American politics in the UN or the OAS.

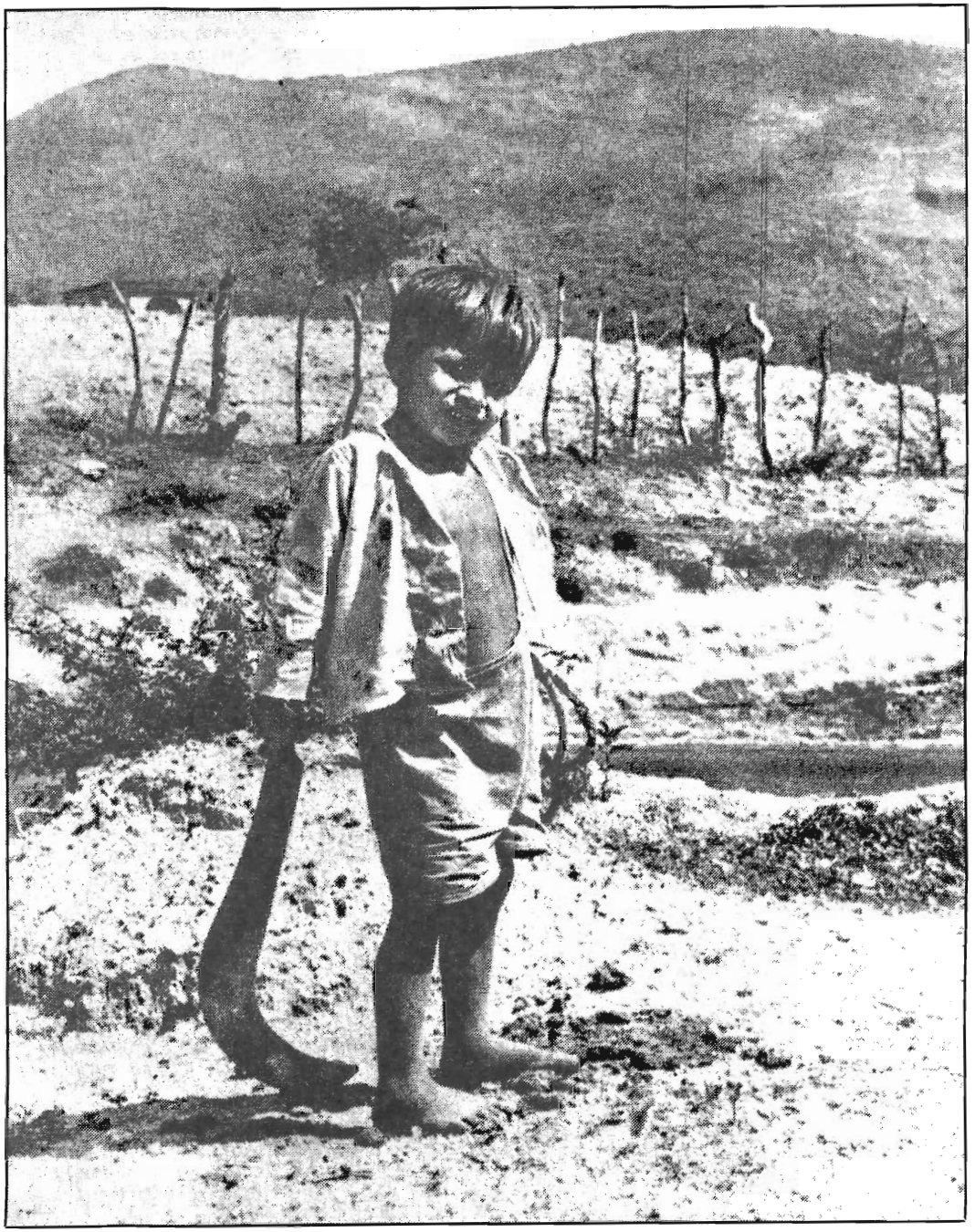
There is no lack of land nor a surplus of people. What is going on is that it is very badly distributed.

The unemployed and underemployed amount to more than 2 million . . .The workers in their majority have insufficient wages, with the exception of a reduced group that the oligarchy is transforming into a labor aristocracy, in order to put them into opposition to their class brothers . . .It is a lie that the problem of unemployment and low salaries is being fought. It is a lie that the problem of poor health is resolved. It is a lie that the problem of housing is being resolved.

The bourgeoisie is incapable of realizing agrarian reform absolutely, in all its aspects. The basic foods of the Mexican people are corn and beans, and not even these are produced in sufficient quantity, even though the people are undernourished . . . .

The agrarian apologists have had 5, 15, and up to 30 years "in process;" and what has resulted? Through true sacrifices, the peasants give money to send commissions to Mexico City to ask for a little piece of land that for others is surplus and idle. And what have they obtained other than promises and papers? With persistence and self-sacrifice, peasant leaders have acted broadly and legally time and again, to advance the just petitions of the peasants, following all the procedures with the patience and submission of Jesuits for years and years. And what have they obtained other than aggression, attacks and jailings? Time and again over many years, the peasants have demanded their problems be attended to and issued several warnings through caravans, land takeovers, shutdowns. What have they achieved other than the "attention" of the army and the goon squads?

It is necessary to point out without beating around the bush, that the capitalist regime neither can, nor wants to, eliminate unemployment, because a greater abundance of workers means lower wages and fewer contractual obligations. In the



coming years, the problem will worsen noticeably, and even more when the coming crisis sets in in the US.

How different is reality! How far they are from resolving the urban problem! Enough of allowing ourselves to be dazzled by neon signs, of dulling ourselves with smells and sounds of travelling a little outside the route worn by the tourists. Let the other side of the coin be seen, the other Mexico, that of proletarian colonias, where you must line up before dawn to get a bucket of water, where you must line up to get some cheap milk.

How could they say that there are too many doctors, if there are thousands and thousands of communities without a single one? How can they assert that there are too many teachers if there are thousands of communities without a school, millions of illiterates, hundreds of thousands of children of school age who receive no attention? . .

From the relations between the dependent countries and the metropole has arisen the original "industry without smokestacks," the tourist industry. Certain investors build hotel chains, casinos and bars; they perfect the white-slave trade, make the government build roads and adjust the transportation system to conform to the needs of their industry, and carry out an enormous propaganda campaign to attract tourists and make them spend their dollars. One of the conditions for the development of this "industry" is that the communists be rounded up so that they don't scare the tourists. . . .

. . . With respect to the grave ills which afflict the people, the bourgeoisie neither wants nor would be able to do anything serious to resolve them. It makes and will make, however, as part of its politics of domination, real concessions with the object of tightening the chains of oppression, pacifying vast sectors, and impeding the revolutionary outburst of the people. . . .

CONCERNING THE CRITICISM OF THE LEFT

From the structural point of view, the masses do not command unitary, combative and efficient organizations. There are on the contrary, a multitude of dispersed, divided, pacifist and inoperative organizations that are not at the level of the masses. They aren't in a position to act correctly during a stage of revolutionary upsurge. They cannot effectuate movements or maneuvers with the audacity that circumstances demand. They lack the sensibility to respond to new stimuli or evaluate new facts. Organizations that are moldy with nearly two decades of exposure to relative quiet, are formed and prepared unilitarally only for conventional struggles, only for 'politricks' and its compromises. They have a vast repertory of subterfuge and demagogic skills, but are absolutely defenseless, disarmed, and useless in the face of the revolutionary tide. They stick to the masses like tight clothing: they impede them and hinder their movement.

Political parties are a great school for revolutionaries and looking at them as the

general staff of the proletariat is absolutely necessary. But what happens in our country is the same as in others and the same as occurred in Cuba. Such parties who, in fact have nothing to do with the working class, think that a signboard is enough to make you the vanguard. . . .

The Mexican Communist Party and the Popular Socialist Party (or at least their leaderships) coincide in a series of fundamental points:

** they have renounced revolution;*

** their attention is fixed exclusively on the conventional forms of struggle and they forget the principal revolutionary forms;*

** they accept only what is legal and peaceful from proletarian doctrine;*

** they don't dare to do more than what's on the list of things permitted, authorized and registered by the government secretariat.*

. . . They are in love with bourgeois peace; they have adjusted themselves and naturalized themselves to this. They feel useless outside the atmosphere of political maneuvering, and they fear a revolutionary situation the way a fish fears the water will dry up.

In Mexico, the left parties seem to have forgotten their historic mission, forgotten who are their enemies, because they use all their courage and all their energies to attack each other and to attack the organizations of the masses. . . .

And if (referring to the opportunists) they think they will win ministries by peaceful means. . .they are wasting their time. We can guarantee them that they will win nothing by peaceful means, not even a majority or local deputy; and if by exception they achieve that, it will remedy nothing for the people. Even supposing that the left won the majority in the Chamber of Deputies, that would change no-

A mural in Tierra y Libertad colonia, Ciudad Juarez . . . "Don't Vote"

thing in the people's situation because legislative power is not what determines national politics. . .the fundamental affairs of our homeland are decided in the U.S. Embassy and the homes of a few functionaries. . . the parliament can serve only as a tribune to make denunciations, agitation and propaganda and nothing more.

The masses are the makers of history; every time they have the smallest possibility to advance, their advance becomes a run and then a revolutionary leap. In this process, not every one takes the same step; some are going to straggle because of obesity, the result of a long, sedentary life whose inactivity has robbed them of skill, speed and security. The masses don't hold back to wait for stragglers, whether they be people or parties. They fill the vacant posts themselves. . .

What kind of political thinking is that? Where do they hope to go by this road? By what right, with what moral authority, on what basis do they condemn those groups of us that fly out of their closed orbit? By what right or moral authority, on what grounds, do they criticize us and call us adventurists and irresponsible?

THE ONLY ROAD TO FOLLOW

The proletariat. . .is the new class and in full development and potentially the most conscious and revolutionary, but the bourgeoisie has achieved control over it to such a degree that for now and in the near future, the working class is not in con-

Protracted peoples war is the strategy for victory in El Salvador.

dition to head up an armed insurrection and possibly not even to support one initiated by other sectors. It's necessary that a revolutionary situation be developed for it to leave its present state and assume its role of vanguard.

Even though from the historical point of view, the peasantry is a class in the process of disintegration, we consider that for the moment, they and the progressive petty bourgeoisie in the cities are the only sectors in a condition to put in motion the armed movement in our country.

The peasantry has played the fundamental role in our history and in the next revolution it will have the determining role in its first stages. . .

"The struggle will be terribly protracted. It will not be counted in years but in decades; therefore it is already the hour to begin. It is necessary to start young if we want to have the qualities that only the years of action can give . . ."

We are convinced that the hour has arrived to speak to the powerful in the only language they understand. The hour has arrived in which the most audacious vanguards take up the gun, because it's the only thing that those in power listen to with respect. The hour has arrived to see if bullets will penetrate their heads where reason has never entered; the hour has arrived to support ourselves with .30--30's more than with legal codes and articles of the constitution.

The revolutionary is not just a person with an accumulation of scientific understandings and fluency in the language of dialectics, but also one who, in addition to this, has a series of qualities, attitudes, capabilities, and revolutionary habits that cannot be learned in any book, because they are acquired and developed only in revolutionary action together with the masses.

The history of humanity, the experience of all the people of this world, facts and revolutionary science, demonstrate that only through revolution is it possible to take political power and emancipate the masses. Never have any people known another road to emancipate themselves, other than armed struggle. Revolution is the only road that exists for the peoples of the world. The road of political and parliamentary maneuvering is the way that certain leaders and directors choose, but not to emancipate the people; rather to approach the oligarchy and make a pact with it, to seek protection for their own interests born of their daily treason to the revolutionary movement. Certainly the sacrifices that a revolution implies are very great; therefore not everyone is a revolutionary. But the blood that will be spilled to liberate the masses is today being spilled in vain. The quicker the revolution the better; thus, we can greatly reduce the needless suffering of the people.

The duty of the revolutionaries is to synthesize and rationalize the experience that the masses obtain in their struggles and to integrate it into the revolutionary

movement. . .and to point out the conclusion that only by changing the system will the masses be able to emancipate themselves, and that the only road that leads to definitive liberation is that of revolutionary action to bring down and destroy the bourgeoisie.

Within the very bosom of the masses will arise the leadership. It is not important that their militants might not be experienced in 'politricks', a thing of the past; but on the contrary that they will be capable of carrying forward the revolution. . .

. . .There are more than a hundred arguments in favor of the peaceful way, but we will look at only the principal one: that the existence of the socialist camp with its colossal economic, political, military and moral force eliminates the need for the national revolutions since those countries will be in charge of conquering imperialism and will give our peoples the gift of a new regime; it being asserted that this was the way that socialism was built in the countries in Eastern Europe; e.g., that the Red Army was victorious over fascism and put the proletariat in power in those countries. But the facts are different. In those countries, the people picked up the gun and fought boldly against the Nazis for several years, and against their own oppressors. To say the regime they enjoy is a gift, is a tremendous insult to those peoples and to the memory of their heroes and martyrs. . .

. . .That yanki imperialism is ready to intervene in any country whatsoever and therefore an armed movement would serve as a provocation. . .In countries like Mexico, where the revolutionary struggle is incipient and timid, imperialism doesn't need to maintain an army of occupation. This doesn't mean that Mexico is not invaded and subjugated. . .Yanki imperialism, sooner or later, will occupy our homeland militarily. But imperialism also can be destroyed; it is being destroyed in other areas, and it will be destroyed in Mexico as well.

The road that we have chosen is perfectly clear; we think that it is already the hour to initiate the revolution. We know that not all the conditions have matured but we are not going to settle down and wait for them. They will mature in the heat of revolutionary actions. . . .

We see the reconstruction of the worker's movement, the unification of the left, and the unification of a democratic front as the fruit of a revolutionary armed process, not as its antecedents and prior requirements. Whoever hopes to see the rebirth of the CTM (Confederation of Mexican Workers), the unity of the left or similar things first, will grow old without seeing any cessation whatsoever in the hostilities among the left forces. There isn't the level of consciousness that is needed, but the revolutionary process is what can give the masses that consciousness, a thing which political maneuvering can never do. . . .

Arms are instruments which man wields, and not the inverse. Weapons are not what makes history or decides battles; rather it is the popular masses who aim those weapons and are confronted by them. . . .

Those who work seriously know it isn't easy to organize a revolutionary movement. One can't begin with a powerful clandestine organization and have hundreds

of guerrillas, nor will uprisings be produced in the middle of the country. They will not be at the same time or the same day. . . .

The struggle will be terribly protracted. It will not be counted in years but in decades; therefore it is already the hour to begin. It is necessary to start young if we want to have the qualities that only the years of action can give. . .

We have faith in the popular masses and we know that from their midst, more revolutionaries will rise up every day to take the responsibility of preparing and initiating action. For our part, we will not take a single step backwards on the road of revolution. We know that without the support of the masses we will not be able to triumph. To win their confidence and support is our principal concern and we propose to achieve it through deeds.

State of Chihuahua, February 1965.

CONQUER OR DIE!!!

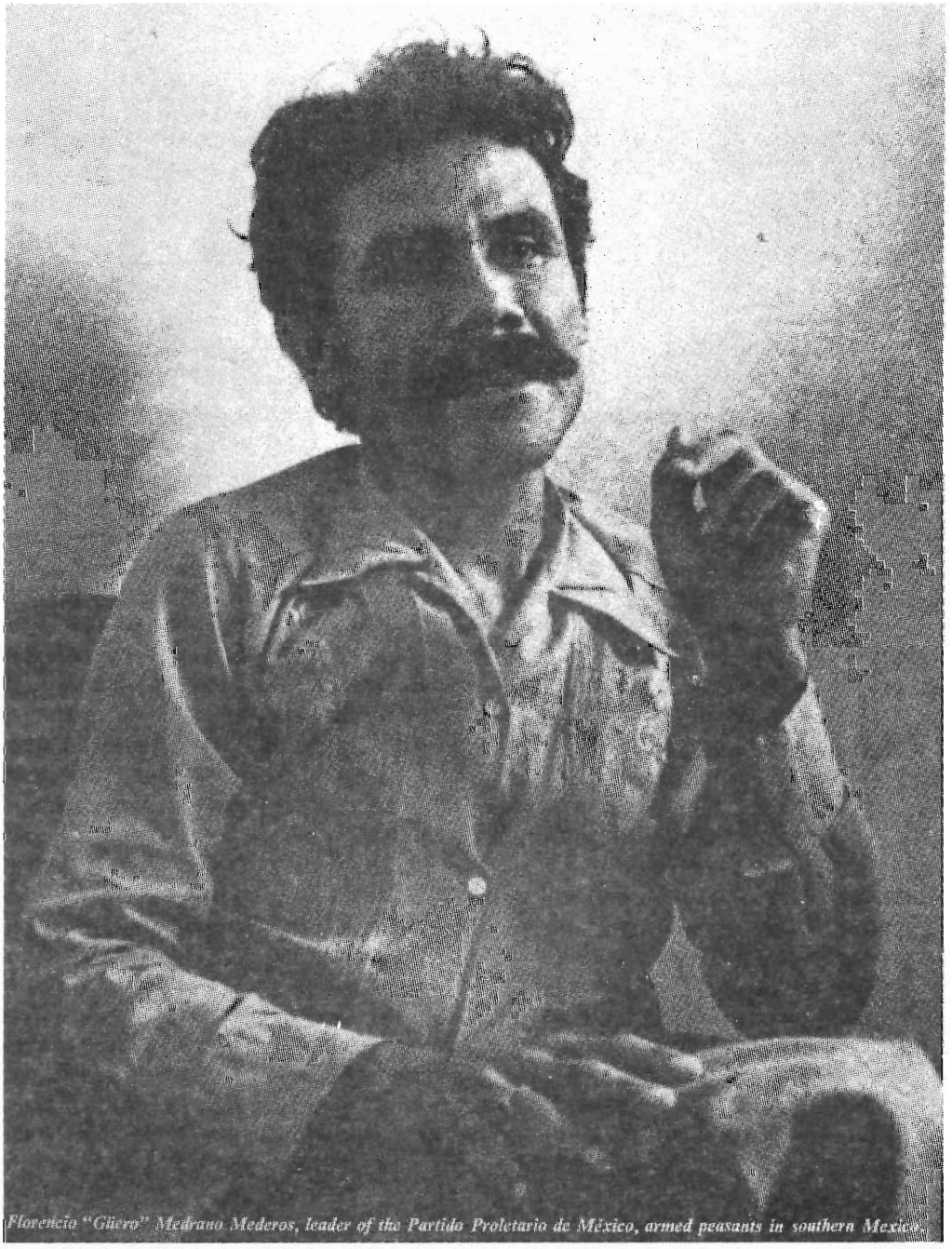
AFTERWORD

By the end of 1974, the Mexican army had put the state of Guerrero under a state of siege. Troops supplied with U.S. helicopters and infra-red spotting devices under the guise of the Drug Enforcement Administration scoured the mountains looking for Lucio Cabañas and the Partido de los Pobres. In December of 1974, Cabañas and 19 others were killed in a battle with the army. A number of the surviving members of the organization were captured shortly thereafter and the group failed to survive this repression.

Shortly before Cabañas' death, his group had joined forces with another revolutionary organization, the Partido Proletario Unido de America, under the leadership of Florencio Medrios Medrano. Medrano's long history of struggle began with his involvement in the land struggle in the village where he was born. His political development was spurred on by a trip to China in 1969 where he studied the Chinese revolution under Mao. He saw how the question of class struggle had been applied in a nation that was predominantly peasant. On his return to Mexico, Medrano became involved in an invasion and takeover of land owned by an Italian industrialist in the state of Morelos. The squatter's village, the Colonia Ruben Jaramillo, was constructed over the next 3 months. 30,000 peasants came to the encampment during this time and 400 homes, a meeting hall, an infirmary and several schools were constructed. In September 1973, 10,000 soldiers attacked the colonia, destroying it and killing Medrano's cousin.

Along with the surviving leadership of the colonia, Medrano escaped to the hills to form the P.P.U.A. After a short time of activity in conjunction with Cabañas' forces, Medrano realized that the Partido de los Pobres was becoming isolated from its mass base. Although Cabañas also realized that a change in tactics was called for, the heavy repression that had already set in made this change unfeasible. They agreed that Medrano and his compañeros should leave Guerrero for Michoacan where they began training peasants for armed land seizures. By 1978 the movement of peasants organized by the Partido Proletario Unido Mexicano (the P.P.U.M. as it had become known) had spread into regions of Oaxaca, Morelos, Veracruz and back into Guerrero. In that year alone, over 1000 armed land seizures took place with more than 200 peasants killed throughout the whole of Mexico.

Like the other guerrilla groups that preceded it, the P.P.U..M. financed its activity through revolutionary expropriations. But perhaps more than any of the earlier attempts at armed revolutionary organization, the P.P.U.M. succeeded in maintaining and greatly broadening its mass base throughout its existence as a political-military force. Medrano's organizing gave important practical and theoretical foundations for the strategy of protracted people's war as applied to the situation of Mexico.

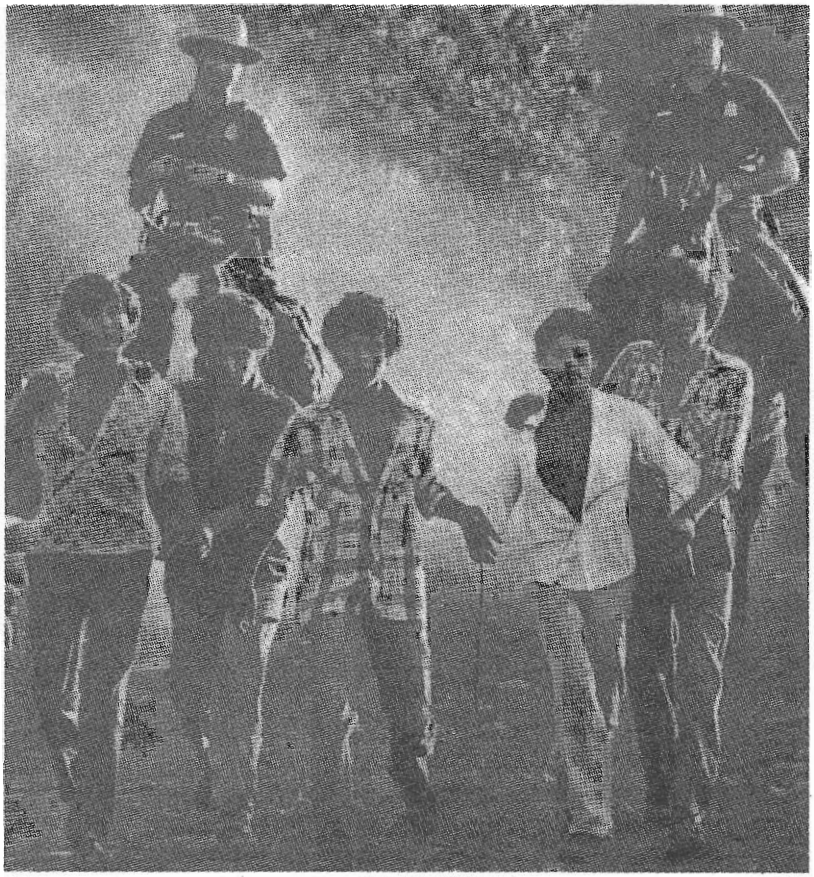


Florencio "Güero" Medrano Mederos, leader of the Partido Proletario de México, armed peasants in southern Mexico.

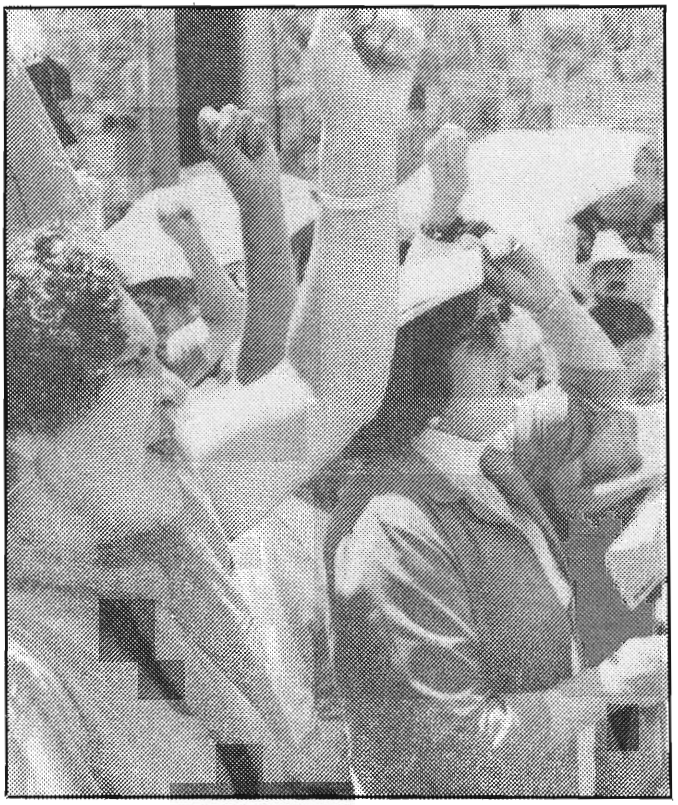
Medrano was also one of the first Mexican revolutionaries to advance the idea that the "U.S. Southwest" was in reality the occupied territories of Mexico, that like Vietnam, Mexico had a north and a south. The south was where the armed struggle was taking place, while the occupied north was where the Mexicano revolutionaries could act as a rearguard, fighting behind Yankee lines, in unity with revolutionary forces south of the border. Medrano struggled for the idea that Mexicano people, north and south, were one nation divided by U.S. imperialism. He never recognized the legitimacy of the border dividing the Mexican nation.

Medrano and the P.P.U.M were hunted down relentlessly by the Mexican army. On March 28th, 1979, Medrano was murdered in the mountains of Oaxaca by a unit of the Mexican army headed by General Castillo of the Military Zone number 18.

Since Medrano's death, no political-military organization of the significance or on the scale of the P.P.U.M., the Partido de los Pobres, the A.C.N.R. or Arturo Ga-



U.S. terror along the illegal border.



Women of the CDP.

miz' organization has yet emerged. Yet the independent left has emerged on a mass scale and has been able to draw important political lessons from the armed organizations of the 60's and 70's. Organizations like the Comite de Defensa Popular in the state of Chihuahua, which has organized over 300,000 landless people into colonias, have applied strategic principles in their rejection of the electoral arena and the "political reform" and have seen the necessity of the masses of Mexican people taking direct action for their basic demands with the ultimate goal being the destruction of the dependent capitalist state in Mexico. The C.D.P., independent unions of workers, and peasants, have organized massive land takeovers, occupations of factories and schools, and huge demonstrations in the past years. In addition, the C.D.P. has initiated a discussion throughout the Mexican left about the politics of socialist reunification of the occupied northern territories and the necessity for unity of revolutionary Mexicanos, north and south. These mass movements are a fertile ground in which the political military vanguards of the next period will develop and in which they will be able to root a mass revolutionary movement for the socialist reunification of Mexico.